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MY
FATHER'S HAND
AND
OTHER STORIES

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"Only keep your hand in mine, and you are safe."

Page 7.

MY FATHER'S HAND;

AND

OTHER STORIES AND ALLEGORIES FOR THE YOUNG.

BY

MRS. CAREY BROCK,

AUTHOR OF "SUNDAY ECHOES IN WEEK-DAY HOURS;"
"CHILDREN AT HOME," ETC.

SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, 54, FLEET STREET,
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The following stories and allegories were published separately some years ago, without the author's name. Most of them being out of print, the whole series is now republished in this collected form.

MY FATHER'S HAND;

AND

OTHER STORIES AND ALLEGORIES.

MY FATHER'S HAND.

"MAMMA," said little Annie Groves to her mother, one Sunday afternoon, "may I soon come to your room to hear my Sunday story, and may Janet come with me? You promised me you would tell me an allegory to-day, you know. I like allegories so much."

Mrs. Groves told her little girl that she might come to her room in half an hour, when she would be quite ready to tell her the promised story, and that, of course, she must bring Janet with her, Janet being a little cousin who was then staying with Annie on a visit.

As soon as Mrs. Groves had left the room, Janet

said, "Does your mamma tell you stories every Sunday afternoon?"

"Yes," said Annie, "always, unless I have been inattentive at church in the morning, and then I have no story, but that does not happen very often now. To-day, mamma says, we are going to have an allegory, and I like that the best of all."

"What is an allegory?" asked Janet.

"An allegory!" exclaimed Annie, "don't you know what it is? I don't quite know how to explain to you, but I know very well what it means myself. It is a story with a meaning to it, a story to teach us something more than the book really says, like some of the stories in the Bible, you know, Janet, the Good Samaritan, and the story about the Ten Virgins. Parables are allegories, you know."

But Janet did not seem to know much about it, and Annie was anxious she should hear her mamma's story, which, she said, would make it plain to her. The two little girls were soon sitting one on each side of Mrs. Groves, while she repeated to them the story Annie had so longed to hear in the following simple words:—

"It was on a warm summer's day that I first observed two travellers walking together along a

narrow road. One of them was a very tall powerful man, with an erect figure, and a firm step. The other was a small delicate child, who held closely by his hand. Before them, at a considerable distance from the path in which they were walking, stood a beautiful castle, which I was told was surrounded with the most lovely gardens, and filled with every thing that was pleasant or beautiful, but it was too far in the distance for me to be able to see anything more of it from where I stood than the turrets rising high above the trees that surrounded them. To this castle, however, I soon discovered that the travellers' steps were turned, for as I followed behind them, I could hear their converse together, and they spoke of the noble Castle as the Home which they were soon to reach.

"'Is it a very lovely place, father?' the child asked.

"And the father answered, 'So lovely, my child, that the Book which describes its beauties to us says that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, nor is it even possible for any one to imagine half the beauty or the glory that shall be found therein.'

"'I wish I were there,' said the child, for she was beginning to grow tired. And soon after she had said his, I saw that she slackened her pace, and would have

fallen back, if it had not been that she was holding her father's hand.

"'You are tired, my child,' he said, gently.

"'Yes, father, very. You walk too fast for me. If you will let go my hand, I think I shall walk better alone.'

"'No,' he answered, 'that cannot be. You are weak and little, and cannot get on quickly. In compassion for your weakness, I will lead you gently along, but I will not leave you go, for if I did, you would only walk more and more slowly, and you would fail to reach our promised home before nightfall.'

"And the strong father held the little hand firmly in his own, whilst the child, finding herself urged gently but powerfully forward, looked up gratefully into his face, and soon when she found how much progress she had made on her journey, almost, as it seemed, unconsciously to herself, she said,

"'I am so glad now, father, you did not let me try to walk alone. I never could have got so far on my journey without you, though I wanted at first to take away my hand.'

"'You did not know your weakness, my child,' replied the father, 'you are never *safe* but when your hand is in mine.'

"'Then, father,' she made answer, 'I will never wish to take it out again.'

"But it was not long before the child had changed her mind. The road, which at first had been but narrow and dull, had widened now, and led through pleasant green fields, which were full of the most beautiful flowers, soft yellow primroses, and bright bluebells, and gay buttercups. The child would fain have gathered a nosegay of these gay flowers, and in order to do so, had well nigh withdrawn her little hand from her father's, when he prevented her by holding it more firmly within his own, while he asked her what she wanted.

"'A nosegay of those bright flowers, father. See how many grow in this field,' she replied.

"'And still more grow in the field beyond,' her father answered, 'and yet more in the field beyond that. If once I allowed you to go in search of them when would you return? You would wander further and further from me; perhaps, beyond the reach of my voice, you might not hear me if I were to call; perhaps even out of sight of me altogether, you might not be able to find me when you would most need me. No, my child, no; you are mine, and I cannot let you go.'

"'But the flowers, father, there is no harm in

admiring them. They are beautiful and they smell so sweetly. Am I to have no flowers?'

"'There are some in this path,' he answered, 'you may gather them without taking your hand from mine. Those in the fields beyond look brighter only because they are more distant. No flowers are safe to seek but such as grow in this our straight path, and even these you may not stop to gather lest you should lose our time, and not reach the castle before night. The flowers which grow at your feet you can gather as you walk.'

"And the child heeded what her father said, and did so. She did not stop upon her journey, neither did she turn out of the road which led towards the castle, but ever and anon she gathered a fair flower which was growing at her feet, until at length she had a fragrant nosegay of them; and the sight of their beauty and their sweet smell were most refreshing to her, as she walked on, holding the flowers in one hand, while with the other she held her father's hand.

"They passed soon through high hedges laden with summer fruit, hanging in rich clusters from the heavy boughs, and again the child would have stopped, and eaten abundantly of the fruit. But her father re-

strained her, and still urged forward the steps which were again growing unwilling.

"'It is the same as with the flowers,' he said. 'You may not stop to eat. Take what grows over your path, and be thankful for it, for so much as you find there is meant for your refreshment.'

"And the child took it, and was thankful, and the journey passed pleasantly for some time. After this the road turned into a different sort of place altogether. It no longer led through green fields, and amidst tempting fruit and flowers, but through so gloomy a forest that I could scarcely believe that it was that kind father's intention to lead that delicate child through so dreary a place. Nor was I surprised when I saw her cling to him, and heard her ask, in a frightened voice, whether they must pass through that dark wood.

"'You must, my child,' he answered, 'for our road lies there. But there is no need to fear. You will hear the wild beasts roar. You will feel the cold wind blow. But only keep your hand in mine, and you are safe—as safe as when you walked but now amidst the fruit and flowers—and safer, for you will not now be tempted to leave my side.'

"And so it proved. The trembling child clung closer to her father. He held her tight. The beasts of the forest came forth, and glared upon them as they passed along, but when they met the eye of that strong man fixed upon them, they quailed beneath his look, and shrank back to their hiding-places. The cold wind blew, and often the child shivered; but the hand that was within her father's was always warm, and the kind words of tenderness he spoke to her kept her heart from sinking. And so they passed through the dark wood, out into the daylight beyond, and then I saw that the child's face had an older and a graver look than it had worn before. And I saw, too, that she was much nearer her journey's end. The castle was full in view. Its turrets were shining brightly in the light of the evening sun, the rays of which fell directly upon her. It was delightful to have passed the horrors of that dreary wood, and the child went joyfully on, until at length they were so near the castle, which was in future to be her home, that she could distinctly hear the sound of the harpers within its walls playing upon their instruments.

"'Oh, father,' she said, 'we shall soon be there. I do not care for my flowers now. They seem to me

worth nothing, now that I am going to such much better things.'

"And she let them fall at her feet, and her father did not prevent her from doing so. He only said, 'Yes, you will have far lovelier ones when you shall be with me in my home. There was no harm in your caring for these when you had them. They did not hinder you on your journey, for you never stopped to seek for them, or to lose your time in looking upon them when you had them, and they served to refresh you by the way. But now you can let them go. You need them no more; and, besides, near as the castle gates are, see you that deep moat that surrounds the walls, and that dark stream that flows through it. That moat must still be passed, and you will need to cling closer than ever to me.'

"The child looked and trembled. She saw no more the castle walls. She heard no more the harper's songs, for the fear that had seized her. But her father bade her cling closely to him, and then, raising her in his arms, he bore her safely through the stream, and landed her within the castle gates. And at the sight of the glory that there awaited her, she fell upon her knees, and exclaimed in joyful thankfulness. 'My father's hand has brought me here.'"

Mrs. Groves ended her story, and Annie exclaimed, "I know its meaning, mamma. It is like the Christian going through life trusting to Jesus."

"Yes, Annie," said her mother, "Jesus is *our* Father's Hand, leading us safely to our heavenly home, weaning our hearts from the pleasures of this world, only allowing us to enjoy just as much earthly happiness as He sees will not prevent our pursuing diligently our heavenly journey, leading us safely through the hours of trial which every Christian must meet with on his road to heaven, protecting us from the cold wind of sorrow, and the fierce attacks of temptation, driving from us all our spiritual enemies, and finally bearing us in his everlasting arms across the dark stream of death, and landing us safely within the heavenly gates."

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES.

"WEIGHED in the balances and found wanting." They were solemn words, and very solemn they sounded to me as I stood a silent spectator on that important day, and watched the scene before me. A strange scene it was! And yet it seemed to me that somewhere or from some one, I had heard such things spoken of before. I stood now at the gates of a magnificent city, and around me were many individuals, all apparently eager for admission through those jewelled gates, and within those pearly walls; for all whom I saw there had alike eager and expectant faces. In all things else they were different each from the other. I know not that I ever saw so diverse a group. The old were there, some leaning on worn-out staves, and bending heavily beneath the weight of many anxious, weary years. And the young were there too, not, perhaps, in such numbers, but there were many

standing there with limbs all unwearied with exertion, and foreheads all unruffled with care or thought. I could see even little children, from whose fair faces the first freshness of infant innocence had not yet passed away. Many were rich in the treasures of earth. These were clad in purple and gold, and wore rich chains about their necks, and jewelled rings and bracelets on their hands and arms. Doubtless those chains and jewels were of rare value once, for I heard a bystander say that they had all been gathered from Golconda and Peru, but they looked but pale now, and their lustre seemed to have faded. I supposed that this might be because they could not bear comparison with the jewels that shone upon those gates with such a wondrous brilliancy that it seemed to me it scarce could be of earth. And the poor stood there also, some barely clothed in the meanest rags. They all stood side by side, nor did any one but myself seem able to perceive that there was any difference between them. And yet when they spoke, their language was different one from the other. They were of all nations, and of all tongues, gathered together, as it seemed to me, from all parts of the earth, to meet in one vast group at that jewelled gate, and ask admission there. And even those that spoke the same

language, spoke it in different tones. For the scholar was there, the deeply-learned in all that earthly lore can teach; and the philosopher, whose eye had learned to see wonders close hidden to others, whose ear had listened to sounds which duller ears failed to perceive. The musician was there too; and the poet, whose language had been music to others; and the genius, whose kindling eye told of the fire of mind burning brightly within—these stood there also, and they stood side by side with the humblest and most ignorant of earth's children. All stood together—all had the same object: to enter within those pearly walls, to have that jewelled gate opened unto them, to pass through it to the fields of everlasting green beyond, where the river of life ceased not to flow.

It was a worthy object. I wondered not that it should draw so many from such distant parts, both of rich and poor. I wondered not that the rich should come, for I supposed that they knew, as I did, that their riches could not last beyond a short time; that they must leave them some day, and doubtless they wanted to make sure of some more lasting riches in some other region. And I wondered not that the poor should come—they whose whole life had been

spent in poverty and trouble; could they do otherwise than rejoice when they heard speak of a city where inexhaustible treasures were provided for the poorest? Could they do otherwise than set themselves to seek for it?

Nor did I wonder to see the aged standing there with bowed forms, and wrinkled features, and grey hairs. Doubtless they felt that the ground beneath their feet was crumbling fast away, and they longed to reach some place where they could again stand sure. And the young! they were the fewest in number, and I heard say that some came there from fear, because the sound had reached their ears that the place they came from would not much longer be a safe abode for them, for that destruction threatened speedily to fall upon it; others came, they said, from love to some One of whom they had heard who lived within those gates, and whose gracious presence they earnestly longed after. But large as was the group I saw that day, and widely different as were the individuals who composed that vast group, they all alike stood without the gate, and no one seemed able to open it. And then it was that I heard those solemn words which still resound upon mine ears, for truly they are not words which once

heard can soon be forgotten — "Weighed in the balances and found wanting."

I drew nearer, and I looked more closely, and then the truth appeared before me. Each was bringing something in his hand to present before that gate. And the things each brought were being weighed, carefully weighed. I longed to know more of this, and I drew near, and stood beside the balances. And I saw that they were just balances, for they were made by Him unto whom a false balance is an abomination, and they were held by Him who accepteth not the person of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, but who judgeth righteous judgment.

I watched those eager applicants as one by one, each by himself, drew near to the balances, and laid upon them those things which they had to give. The first whom I saw approach was a stately-looking person in rich clothing, with a look of the most placid contentment upon his countenance, as though he feared not to be refused, and he placed in the balance—it was a goodly gift certainly to behold—a rich sum of money, and many noble deeds of charity. "This sum of money have I spent upon the poor and needy; these churches have I built for thy worship; this hospital

have I instituted for my afflicted brethren." These were his words; and as I heard them, I thought, "All this! how great a gift! Surely it is fitting that unto him at least the gate should be opened." But the gate remained still closed. The gift laid upon the balance seemed not to possess *one* feather's weight. The balance changed not. While again the words sounded solemnly in mine ears, "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

When I turned to look again, it was a very different person that approached; his garb was plain and humble, his countenance was grave and composed, his hands were folded meekly together, and when he laid his offerings into the balance, I heard him say in a *devout* tone, "They are my prayers, my many and fervent prayers—offered at morn, at noon, at even, during the dark watches of the night. They have been many, and they have been sincere." And I looked to see that the gate should be opened, that the balance should weigh down, that he should be accepted. But I saw still the closed gate, the unmoved balance; and again I heard those awful words which each time it made me tremble to hear, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Then my heart sank within me, and I thought, "Who

"Weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

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then shall be found worthy, since no gifts, however costly, no prayers, however constant or fervent, can in themselves prevail?"

I had well nigh turned away in despair, when I saw a third approach, and I paused to hear, for he had neither rich gifts in his hand, nor had he the appearance of great devotion, yet he seemed as though he felt still more confident of success than any other had done; and as he laid his offerings upon the balance, the words he said were, "They are my well-fulfilled duties; the work which my Master gave me to do, truly and well done. Father, husband, friend, citizen—each duty has been well accomplished." And I felt that it had been so, for as he spake, a murmur of approbation ran through the crowd that stood around, and thus confirmed his words. But when I looked, the closed gate opened not, the balance changed not; and again the words rang through the still air, "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

Then I thought I would retire from that sad scene, for surely could there be admittance within that gate for none. But first I would draw near boldly, and learn what could be that mighty weight which lay ever in the other scale, and against which it was so impossible to provide a counterbalancing poise. I

looked, and saw—it was the perfect law of God. And my heart failed within me, and I would have withdrawn altogether, and left that crowd of eager aspirants to meet their disappointment each and all, without my having the pain of further witnessing it, when a voice whispered to me, "Pause, and see." And as I raised my eyes to see, I beheld drawing near unto those awful balances a man of lowly countenance. His eyes were cast upon the ground, and his hands were crossed upon his breast; but as he stepped humbly forward, I saw that his lips moved, and, bending mine ear to listen, I could catch the sound of these words, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

He placed his offering. It seemed an humble one, and I bent forward to see, but could perceive but one drop of blood. But as that precious drop fell into the balance, it turned the scale, which nought else could move; it outweighed even the mighty weight of that perfect law of God—so outweighed it, that it passed from my sight, and I saw it no more, while at that moment the jewelled gate opened wide before my view. My eyes beheld beyond such a glorious flood of light, as dazzled my poor weak sight, while upon my ear

burst such glorious songs of rapturous melody as I had never hoped to hear; they sounded to me like the united voices of ten thousand thousand angels. And as I listened, I could tell that the theme of each angel's song was the redeeming blood of that Lamb of God, one drop of which can cleanse from sin, and open unto man the gates of heaven.

I saw no more. I heard that many others entered also, some bringing with them costlier gifts than any I had seen in the rich man's hands—gifts which were accepted also, because they were all bathed in the precious life-procuring blood—and many bringing, too, holy prayers and devotions, which were acceptable to the great Judge because offered up in the golden censer of his Son's mediation. But I stayed to hear no more, for I had learned the one great lesson which that scene was intended to teach me—that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse from sin, and open the gates of everlasting life.

THE ONE ROBE.

AGAIN was I present at a strange scene, and again did it seem to me as though the sights which there I saw, singular though they were, were not altogether new to me. Had some one told me of them before, or were they things which I had myself read of in days gone by, and forgotten amidst the cares and occupations that had pressed upon me in later years?

I know not; yet, as I stood that day, watching in silent and solemn stillness the strange events that were passing before me, they came upon me with a feeling of association which startled and bewildered me. The Mansion, in front of which I found myself, exceeded in magnificence anything which my highest imaginings had ever conceived. It seemed to me to be altogether without end, for I saw no limit thereto, and the glory of it was so exceeding great that my dazzled eyes could not dwell upon its splendours. The jewels and

the precious stones were such as I felt sure the richest of earth's mines could never have yielded, for I had travelled far and wide upon the habitable globe, and mine eyes had explored its hidden treasures, and gazed upon the fairest of them, yet never had they rested on aught that could compare with the jasper and the sapphire, the chalcedony and the amethyst which there I saw.

I had heard and read of the wonders of ancient days, and the pride and glory of cities, now passed from the sight of man, and my mind had often pictured the scenes of their glory, but never yet had it conceived anything like unto that glorious palace upon which mine eyes now rested. There seemed no light within. I saw no torch or candle. The sun shone not above. Neither did the moon shed forth her calm pale rays upon it. And yet it shone with a light too glorious for words of mine to describe. Dazzled and bewildered, I would have turned aside, but a voice said unto me, "Go not yet, there is still *much* to see. Draw near and look within." And when, in obedience to the voice, I dared to approach closer and gaze within, I saw a banquet laid; prepared, as it seemed unto me, for many guests. The number was too great to count. It seemed infinite. I could see no limit to

the preparations which were made there for a vast multitude of honoured and distinguished guests.

And for the banquet itself! I cannot now describe it. Scarcely can I recall it to my remembrance; for there was nothing like unto the things of earth about it. I had seen the banquets and the feasts of this world, and knew something of the wonders which could be produced to charm the senses and gratify the tastes of the noble and exalted amongst the children of men; but no thought of earth entered my mind as I gazed upon this most unearthly banquet. Music there was, but such as no earthly ear ever bent to listen; the fruits were such as no earthly tree could ever yield; and over all there was a banner, not such as I have seen in the triumphal banquets of this world. There was but one word inscribed upon it, and when I drew near, I saw that it was written all over with the word "Love."

"And for whom," I would have asked, "for whom can a banquet such as this be laid? It is exceeding glorious. Its riches are most wondrous. No eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, surely it hath never entered into the heart of man to conceive aught so glorious and so blessed. But where shall guests be found fit to partake of so rich a feast? Who shall merit so great an honour? For whom can such costly gifts

have been prepared?" And even as I thought this, for I uttered not my thoughts aloud, the same voice that before had detained me when I would have turned away, whispered now unto me, "Look and see, the invitation has gone forth. This is the feast of our Great King; and far and wide has He sent forth his invite. All are bidden; many are coming. Even now the road is lined with them; look and see." And when I lifted up my eyes again, I could see the forms of many thousands appearing in the distance, all seemingly drawing near to the Mansion before which I stood. There seemed no end to the number. Far as the eye could reach the long train could be seen, ever lengthening as I gazed. I was astonished at its size. Before I had thought that no guests would be found for such a royal feast. But now my heart misgave me, lest, even at such a banquet, room should not be found for so vast a multitude of guests. And when I inquired concerning this, the voice answered that there was room for all; "Yet," said it, "all will not enter."

I marvelled at this, for I remarked that the road by which the bidden guests approached was not an easy one. It was steep and rough, and in some places difficult and dangerous, and as some of the foremost

drew nearer I could see that they laboured in walking, and I felt that they must have come from far. What meant that voice then, when it said that all would not enter. Surely the love that had prepared so rich a feast could not refuse admission to any of the wearied guests who had been expressly bidden to it, and who had toiled over so rough a road in responding to the invite.

There was some mystery here. I would wait and see. And, even as I resolved to do so, the foremost guest approached. I gazed upon him carefully as he came up and knocked at the gate which led into the banqueting-room. I watched to see what would be his fate. There was nothing to attract attention in his appearance. He wore a robe of peculiar form and make, but that I was told was worn by all who approached this wondrous banquet; and, indeed, I observed that none of those who were drawing near were without this garment—it seemed to be considered a necessary dress in which to appear in the presence of the Great King, and to sit down with Him at his banqueting-table.

I inquired the name of this garment which all alike wore, and I was told that it was called Religion. I thought that if all who wore this garment

might in consequence enter within that magnificent mansion, and take their place, as welcome guests, at that feast, I too would fain be clothed in a like robe. But, before I could inquire where such a garment might be found, my attention was attracted by an unexpected sight. He who had asked admittance to the banquet had not been allowed to enter. His garment, then, had *not* been found of any avail. Perhaps it was not costly enough! I thought that this must be the case, as, even as he turned away, another drew near, and I remarked that, although the robe which he wore was of a similar shape, it was of a different exterior, and was covered all over with figures—inscriptions they seemed to me—although at the distance at which I stood I could not read what was written thereon. But it was carefully examined. Indeed, it appeared to me that all depended upon this robe which each one wore, for I remarked that it was strictly scrutinized, and the inscriptions, if such they were, carefully read, and then he too was refused admittance.

The next who approached was one striking to behold. His robe was gorgeous beyond anything I had ever seen before; in some respects it resembled the others, yet it was much altered even in form, and

the texture appeared to me to be altogether different; it was of the softest material, and adorned in every way with the richest ornaments and most costly trimmings. To outward eyes he looked a fitting guest for so kingly a banquet, yet was he not intended to partake of it, for to him also was admission refused. Perhaps, I thought, the banquet was not for the rich; perhaps it was intended only for the poor and lowly, and, with a feeling of hope, for my heart was growing weary with the sight of the disappointment of others, I turned my eyes upon an humble applicant who came up to the gate, and who, like the others, showed as her plea to be admitted the robe which she wore. It was examined also, and then, for the first time, I saw a guest accepted. To her the door of the banqueting-room was opened. She entered a happy and welcome guest.

It was, then, as I had imagined, the banquet was for the poor. The Great King, in his condescension, chose to pass over the wealthy and exalted, and to spread his feast for those who, until now, had never partaken of rich fare, who had never known comfort or ease in this life, and who would therefore appreciate all the more fully the delights which his bounty had prepared for them. It seemed to me an act of con-

descension worthy of so royal a host. But, even as I thought so, I became convinced of my error, for one drew near poorer in appearance, more humble in his mien, than the lowly guest who had so lately found an entrance into the banqueting-room. I know not that my eyes had ever before rested upon one so sad and sorrowful as that figure seemed to me as he drew near with a mournful countenance and the slow step of worn-out strength. Surely care must have pressed heavily upon him ere it could have so bowed his form, surely his tears must have fallen in abundance ere they could have left such deep furrows in his pale and haggard cheeks. This would be indeed a fitting object for the Great Master's compassion—a welcome guest at a banquet which was laid expressly for the worn and weary, for the poor and destitute.

But lo, even as I looked to see him enter, and my heart sympathized with him in the joy that I felt was awaiting him, I perceived that there was some difficulty unexpected to me, and I could see equally unexpected to him, for I saw that he fell upon his knees and held up to sight his emaciated hands, and pointed to his tattered garments, as though he would plead these things as a reason why he should be allowed admittance, and something I heard him say about his

having long eaten the bread of adversity and drunk the water of affliction. My heart bled for him, for truly was it a mournful sight to see such an one refused entrance: yet was he not admitted. The banquet was not therefore for the poor.

And, even as I perceived the error which I had made in imagining that it must be so, I was further convinced of it, for, at that moment, one drew near dressed in similar fashion to the rich and noble personage whom I had seen repulsed—his garb was equally costly, his manner equally dignified, his whole appearance to the full as noble, yet must there have been some difference, for, while the one had been refused, the other found a ready admittance. Riches were not then a barrier to exclude, neither was poverty a plea to admission, for I had seen the rich and noble enter, while the poor and lowly were rejected; and, again, I had seen the poor accepted and received within the door, which was closed against the rich and wealthy.

These things troubled me; they were beyond my understanding. And when I would have inquired further into the mystery, the friendly voice made answer to the questionings of my mind in these words:

"Thou seest that there is a difference, but thou knowest not in what this difference consists, for thine eyes are holden that thou canst not see. It is in the robe they wear that all the difference lies."

"But," said I, "they all wear the same robe in shape; one bears resemblance unto another."

"The outward form may bear some resemblance," was the answer, "yet is the difference great."

"But wherein," inquired I, "does this difference consist? Not in outward decorations, for I have seen him rejected whose robe was covered with many ornaments, and written all over, as it seemed to me, with fair inscriptions; and also have I seen him refused who had but little outward ornament to recommend him; in what, then, does this great difference consist?"

"In the material of which the robe is woven," replied the voice. "It is the Great Master's command that none shall be admitted to his banquet save those who shall appear clothed in the garment which his Son Himself has provided for them, and which alone can hide from the King's eyes the many defects in them which would render them unfit to sit down with Him at his table. The sons and daughters of men have heard and read that such a garment is

needed, and they seek to furnish themselves with it. None dare to come without it; but alas! few know where to seek for it. In many ways they strive to prepare a fitting robe, but loving the work of their own hands, and counting that which costs them something, to be more precious than aught which can be provided *for* them, the most part spend their substance in weaving for themselves some costly robe in which to appear at the banquet. That rich man whom you saw rejected, for many years has devoted his wealth to acts of charity and benevolence, and they are not forgotten. You might have seen that one and all were inscribed upon the robe he wore. They were fair to look upon. They brought him honour and glory upon earth. No doubt that as he climbed the road which leads to this mansion, many of his fellow-pilgrims gazed upon his ornamented robe with respect and admiration. But when he reached the gate of the banqueting-room, it was found of no avail. For here we ask not of men's merits, or men's deeds ere we grant them admission. His was a beauteous robe for men's eyes to gaze upon; but the King could see no beauty in it; for it was not of his Son's providing; and his eyes can rest upon no other."

"And that poor, unhappy-looking applicant," I asked, "had he no fitting robe?"

"He had not sought one," was the answer. "His life was wearisome on earth, his sorrows were many and heavy, and hearing of the Great King's compassion, he had counted upon being accepted out of pity for his sufferings. But alas! he knew not, or he remembered not that, wonderful as is our Master's pity—and it is boundless—his justice is as great as his compassion; and being just, He cannot admit any within his royal mansion who have not the one only robe which can hide from His eyes their vileness and deformity."

"And those who entered," I asked, "there were some who found admittance? I saw the noble-looking and dignified enter. I saw, too, admission granted to the poor and lowly."

"Rich and poor alike may enter in," replied the voice. "There is no respect of persons here. The banquet is laid for all. The Great King has a welcome for all. But one thing is needed—the guests must wear the robe his Son has woven."

"And to whom gives He this wondrous robe?" I inquired.

"To all who ask," was the reply. "None ever

asked and were refused. Often has the Great King's Son offered this robe to the children of men, and pressed it upon their acceptance, and they have refused to hear, and turned from Him in contempt. But never have any asked for it and been refused. He offers it to all."

"And on what terms?" I asked; for the wish had arisen in my heart that if it were possible, I, too, might find this robe, and, clothed in it, pass through the door of the mansion into the banqueting-room beyond. "On what terms," I asked, "can this robe be procured?"

"Without money, and without price," the voice made answer. "No man can buy it, were he to give in exchange all that earth's richest mines can produce, for it is the free gift of the Great King's Son. He offers it to all. And all who will may accept it."

"Then," asked I, wondering greatly, "why should any be without it? If the offer is to all, why do not *all* accept it?"

"Because," was the answer, "men do not see their need of it. Their eyes are not anointed with eye-salve, and therefore they see not that they are naked, and care not to accept the white raiment which is offered to them. They think that they are rich and

increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and discover not their mistake, until, like those whom you saw but now, they find themselves rejected because they have not the one true robe."

"Its name?" I asked; "how call you this robe?"

And the voice answered, "It is the Perfect Righteousness of Christ."

Then fell I upon my knees and prayed that I, too, might be clothed in this wondrous robe, that when my turn should come to knock for entrance at the door of the Great Mansion, I might not be rejected.

THE PASSPORT.

It was on a lovely morning in July that little Harry Walters landed with his father at the French town of Havre, and found himself, for the first time in his life, on a foreign shore. He was delighted with everything he saw, and scarcely knew which of the strange sights around him was most worthy of his attention. It was all so different from England, so totally unlike anything he had ever seen before. He looked with delighted interest upon the tall houses, and the rows upon rows of windows which they exhibited; upon the handsome quay and all the ships which lay in it, their masts almost reaching to the tops of the tallest chimneys of the neighbouring houses; upon the curiously-dressed people who came crowding down to meet the steamer as it entered the harbour, chattering in the strange language which Harry had fancied he

knew something about when he learned to speak it with his French master at home, but not one word of which he could now understand, when he heard it spoken by the natives themselves, accompanied by those odd faces and signs which all French people use in speaking, and which seem so strange to those who are accustomed to the quieter ways of sober English folk.

Harry walked to the hotel with his papa in a perfect wonder of delight at all he saw, and the rest of the day was spent as the beginning had been, in seeing strange sights. All was new to Harry. The coaches were not a bit like English coaches; they looked to Harry like three sorts of carriages all joined together so as to make one great lumbering affair, which went dashing along the street dragged by six or eight horses, driven by a curious-looking coachman, who lashed them with an enormous whip in a way which no English horses would have long endured, uttering meanwhile such singular sounds as seemed scarcely human to Harry's ears. He thought the coachman must be the cleverest driver in the world, and certainly the vehicle was the strangest he had ever seen. The front part looked like the chariot in which their doctor at home paid

his visits; the middle part just like the omnibuses in which Harry had sometimes driven with his papa; whilst at the back was a sort of stage-coach, such as passed through the town where Harry lived every day on its way to Bath. Harry could not take his eyes off this curious coach, which his papa told him was called a "diligence," and which, he was astonished to hear, could be driven with safety up the steepest mountains, and over the most dangerous places, notwithstanding its enormous size and unwieldy appearance.

Then Harry saw all the French shops, where the buying and selling seemed to him to go on almost as much outside the door as it did within, for the shop-women in their red handkerchiefs, and white aprons, and tall white caps would follow you outside the house, and talk, and laugh, and make such a noise, that you could scarcely get in a word anyhow.

And the hotel in which they were living was such a curious place, quite unlike the hotels Harry had sometimes stayed at when he was travelling with his papa in England. Here there were no carpets in any of the rooms, and the floors were all polished so smoothly that Harry had to walk along them very carefully to prevent himself from slipping at every

step, although he saw the people of the house running about as quickly as possible, and never seeming to think themselves in any danger of falling.

Little Harry spent several days in this curious old French town of Havre, and then he went with his papa to visit a great many other places in France, and everywhere he saw new sights, and everywhere he was amused and delighted with all he saw.

He did not much care about travelling in the railroad. He was pretty well accustomed to that at home, and got quite enough of it going to and from school; but he greatly enjoyed travelling in the curious thing called a "diligence," which he had first seen at Havre. His papa generally managed to engage places in the front part, which Harry had settled was exactly like Dr. Wilson's chariot, and which he thought was much the nicest of the three parts, because it had glass windows along the front and sides, and so they could see all the country, which is very beautiful. Harry had never enjoyed himself so much in all his life as he did during that short journey in France, and so he told his papa one Sunday evening when they were spending the day in a quiet village, and Mr. Walters had been

reading and talking to his little boy about holy things.

"But there is one thing I don't understand, papa," said Harry, after saying again how happy he had been during the week. "I want to know what is the use of that long paper you carry about in your pocket, and which you have to show at almost every new place we come to."

"It is called a passport, Harry," said his papa; "and it is to show who I am, and prove that I am not doing anything wrong, and may be safely allowed to pass through the country, and it contains a description of my person, so that it may be seen whether I really am the person I pretend to be."

"Oh, papa, do let me see," exclaimed Harry; "does it say that you are tall, and that you have black hair, and that you have a high forehead?"

"Yes, Harry," replied his father, "it says all that, and to-morrow if you like I will show it to you, and you shall translate the words, because it is written in French."

"What a funny paper it must be!" exclaimed Harry. "I never heard of such a thing before. We don't have passports in England. English people go everywhere they like, don't they, papa, without any one

asking them where they come from, or any other questions about themselves?"

Mr. Walters waited a moment or two before he answered his little boy, and then he said, "Yes, Harry, people in England travel about where they like, and need no passports. And yet there is one place which we all want to go to, Harry, and which we cannot reach without a passport."

"Oh, papa! where is that place?" asked Harry. "Do I want to go there?"

"You said you did this morning, Harry, after we had been reading a most beautiful description of it, and all the happiness which is to be found there."

"Oh, papa, I know what place you mean!" exclaimed Harry; "it is heaven. But we don't want a passport to go there."

"Can *any one* go to heaven, Harry?" asked his father. "Are the gates of that beautiful city opened to all who seek for entrance there, or are they only opened to those who come in a particular way?"

Harry did not answer immediately, and his father gave him his little pocket Testament, and told him to read the ninth and tenth verses of the sixth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which tell us that none of those who steal, or lie, or worship idols,

or commit any other sin, shall ever see "the kingdom of God."

"It is no place for the sinful, Harry," said Mr. Walters, gravely. "A God of holiness cannot admit anything that is unholy within the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem; 'without holiness,' the Bible says, 'no man shall see the Lord.' Now, Harry, can you tell me how it is that we, who are unholy, sinful creatures, can ever hope to enter within that beautiful place of which we have been reading to-day?"

"I think, papa," Harry replied, "it is by having all our sins washed away in the blood of Jesus."

"Yes, my boy," his father answered, "that is the passport which alone can admit the poor sinner to heaven—the pardon of our sins by the Lord Jesus Christ. And this passport will be found sufficient to admit any one, however sinful he may have been. The God of heaven rejects none who present this passport at his gate. To-morrow, if you like, you shall amuse yourself with the paper which has excited your curiosity so much, but to-night we may occupy ourselves in examining this far more important heavenly passport which no true traveller to the New Jerusalem ever journeys without. We will take our Bibles, and there we shall have no difficulty in finding out what

are the marks which distinguish the traveller to heaven."

And Mr. Walters made Harry take his Bible, and showed him how those who bear the heavenly passport have their eyes enlightened by the Holy Spirit, their ears opened to hear the Word of God, their mouths filled with the praises of the Lord, their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and all their garments washed whiter than snow in the blood of the Lamb.

Harry never forgot that Sunday evening in the little quiet French village, nor could he ever after see a passport without thinking of his father's words, and remembering the only passport which can gain admittance at the gates of heaven.

"BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT."

FOUNDED ON FACT.

Rosa Carter had begun by little things—by very little things. When she was quite a child, and her mother used to send her to the village shop for sugar, she would stop on the way home in some out-of-the-way corner, where she thought no one could see her, to put her fingers in the bag and take a little, just a little, for herself. When she grew older, old enough to be sent into the neighbouring town to do commissions for her mother, she not unfrequently managed to secure a penny or twopence for herself without its being perceived. Once or twice, indeed, she had succeeded in keeping a sixpence without any one finding it out.

When she left her mother's house, and went to

service for the first time, she was only thirteen years old; but even at that early age, Rosa had learned to steal habitually and systematically, and during the three years that she remained with her first mistress, who kept a small shop in a neighbouring village, she was never once found out, or considered to be otherwise than a very honest girl; rather fond of dress, and of going about to any place of amusement which might come in her way, but honest. No one had ever thought of accusing Rosa Carter of dishonesty. She had had one or two very narrow escapes certainly.

One day the wife of a farmer in the village had come into the shop, and made some extensive purchases, and Rosa, in giving the change, knowing her customer to be rather careless about money, and reckoning upon her not even counting the change, which she placed in her well-filled purse, had ventured to keep back a sixpence. But good Mrs. Barclay *had* discovered her mistake, and was turning back to say so, when Rosa, seeing her coming, had run to meet her, and said, as she offered a sixpence, "I made a mistake, ma'am, when you were in at our shop just now. I gave you a sixpence too little, so I watched for you to come past again." And simple-minded Mrs. Barclay, instead of doubting her words, as Rosa

had greatly feared she would, had believed every syllable, and had given back the sixpence, saying, "I *had* discovered the mistake, Rosa, and was coming back to tell you so; but seeing you are so ready to return the sixpence, you may keep it for yourself."

"What a lucky escape," Rosa thought, as Mrs. Barclay left the shop, and she pocketed her sixpence. "I have saved my character and got my money into the bargain. What a lucky escape!"

So Rosa thought, and so many others like Rosa would have thought also. But any one who had seen the effect which that day's adventure produced upon Rosa's mind would have thought very differently; for her lucky escape tended to harden her in sin, to lead her to glory still more in the thing which should have been her shame, and brought her on several steps in the steep road that leads to destruction.

When Rosa was sixteen, she left her first service for a better one. She went to be maid-of-all-work at Mrs. Brook's, who kept a linendraper's shop in the neighbouring town, and she had been settled there about six months when the event happened which this little story has to tell.

During the six months that Rosa had spent in Mr. Brook's service, she had had several "lucky escapes,"

and several, what she thought, most "fortunate" little adventures.

One day, when her mistress had gone out with the children, she had been able to spend the whole afternoon in the shop, and had succeeded in securing to herself a piece of calico and a cap ribbon, which she knew would not be discovered, as her mistress had given her one like it for a Christmas-box. Another day she had been so "lucky" as to be all alone in the shop when a customer came in, and she had sold her three yards of flannel, and put the money into her own pocket after the woman was gone. Sometimes it was a little thing, sometimes it was a great one; sometimes the "*escape*" was more, and sometimes it was less "*lucky*;" but by degrees Rosa Carter had grown to be a confirmed thief, and a very successful one.

But one night Rosa Carter and the children of whom she had the charge were sleeping in their beds in the upstairs room, and Mrs. Brook was working in the parlour below, when Mr. Brook came in from his shop, and going up to the mantel-piece looked for something which he evidently expected to find there. He was disappointed, however, for there was nothing to be seen on the mantel-piece but the chimney ornaments, an almanac, and a baby's rattle; and, turning

to his wife, he asked "if she had touched a small paper parcel which he had left there ?"

"No," said Mrs. Brook. "What was in it ?"

"Why, money, unfortunately," he replied, "seventeen shillings and twopence, and Dawson's bill for the children's shoes. I told him to call in after his work this evening and I would pay him, and I put the money there all ready for him, just in this corner."

"You must be mistaken," said his wife. "You know you are so forgetful always, you never know where you put a thing down. Most likely you have it in some of your pockets, or perhaps you have left it in the shop."

Mr. Brook turned his pockets inside out, and then he lighted a candle, and went to look in the shop. But the little parcel containing the money for Dawson was not in his pockets, and it was not in the shop. Mr. Brook persisted that he had left it where he said. His wife persisted that he must be mistaken.

"I dusted the chimney-piece myself," she said, "just before tea, and there was nothing there at all."

"And who had been in the room before," asked her husband, "between tea and dinner, when I myself left the parcel there ?"

"No one," said Mrs. Brook; "at least," she

added, "no one but Rosa and the children, and they were only in the room for a few minutes."

"And do you think Rosa——" Mr. Brook began, but before he could finish his sentence, his wife interrupted him.

"Rosa! *She* would not touch a thing that did not belong to her. The girl is as honest as she can be."

"You don't know much about her," said Mr. Brook.

"Her look is honesty itself," said his wife, "and Mrs. Grain gave her such a good character, and she had been there three years."

"Well," said her husband, "perhaps you had better go and ask her, and see whether she looks honest about it or not."

So Rosa Carter was awoke from her first sleep by her mistress shaking her into a state of partial consciousness, and desiring that "she would say at once what she had done with the little paper parcel her master had left on the parlour mantel-piece;" Mr. Brook having especially desired that the question should be put to her in this form. But, although only partially awake, Rosa's answer was quite ready, "She didn't know where the parcel was, she hadn't seen any parcel; should she get up and look?"

"No," her mistress said, "that would do, she might go to sleep."

And to sleep Rosa went, while her mistress returned to the parlour, and told her husband what she had said, and that "no one who had seen her look, could doubt her word, she knew no more about the parcel than he did; it would most likely turn up some weeks hence, in some out-of-the-way corner where he had left it, or perhaps never turn up at all; she had often told him that he would lose his money some day, if he would persist in leaving it about, and now her words had come true."

This was so true, that Mr. Brook thought it wise to say no more about the lost money. Dawson called in for his little bill soon afterwards, and was told to "call again," upon which he went greatly disappointed to his own house, thinking all the while how much he should have liked to have carried home those seventeen shillings and twopence to his wife and seven children.

After he had gone, no more was said about the money. Mrs. Brook went on with her work, Mr. Brook read the newspaper. What a "lucky escape" this had been. How Rosa would triumph to-morrow, and inwardly declare, as she often did, that "her good

luck never forsook her." But to-morrow was not yet come. No, nor was to-morrow to be such a day for Rosa as she thought.

The clock struck ten, Mrs. Brook was still sewing diligently, for the business about the parcel had delayed her, and interrupted her work, which she had set her heart upon finishing that evening. Mr. Brook was growing impatient, for he wanted to shut the house. It was always his custom to be up the last, that he might be sure all the fires were well out, and that there was no danger of his shop being set on fire during the night.

"Are you not going to bed?" he asked more than once.

"I am very anxious to finish this frock for Lucy," his wife replied; "she is going with me to spend the day at my uncle Martin's to-morrow, and as my aunt embroidered the frock, I want to make it up for her to wear when she goes there. I had a visit from my uncle to-day," she added, "and I had nearly forgotten to tell you; that fuss about Dawson's bill put it completely out of my mind; he brought over a couple of wild ducks as a present to you, hearing you say the other day that you liked them. George shot them himself somewhere near their place. You know you

found those we had for dinner there the other day so good."

Mr. Brook was interested at once in this piece of information. A good dinner was unfortunately a weak point with him. He would have been very much surprised if any one had told him there was the smallest harm in the affection which he entertained for the good things of this world. If Mr. Brook were a little out of temper, the sight of his dinner would have more effect in restoring him to good humour than anything else, and, although he was in general a good-tempered man, a badly-dressed dinner would generally succeed in discomposing him. So that, if Mrs. Brook wished to secure an extra half hour's work that evening, she made a very good hit when she remembered to mention the wild ducks.

"Not a bad thing, certainly," remarked her husband, with a pleasanter tone of voice than had been heard from him since he discovered the loss of his money, "but I suppose you don't know how to dress them. Your aunt's dinner was cooked to perfection, everything is in the cooking; do you know how to do them?"

"Why, not exactly," replied his wife, "but I can find out. I will look in my cookery-book, it is sure to be there."

"And where is your cookery-book?" asked Mr. Brook, now so completely interested that he did not think any more about its being past ten.

"On the bookshelves," his wife replied. But it was not there, and then Mrs. Brook remembered that she had lent it to Rosa, and glad to see her husband so occupied with this business as to allow her time to finish hers, she begged him to go, and see if it were not on the kitchen dresser.

Away he went, but it was some time before he returned, and when he did, there was no book in his hand. He looked so angry and excited that his wife was frightened, but, before she could find time to ask what was the matter, he exclaimed, "Come with me;" and Mrs. Brook followed him to the kitchen, not being able to imagine what she should see there! The contents of the dresser seemed to have been emptied on the table, where they lay together in a confused mass, cups, saucers, plates, and dishes being mixed together with reels of thread, needle-cases, ends of ribbon, bits of slate-pencil, and a variety of other articles of the same description—the contents of the dresser-drawers, which had all been turned out together.

The first idea that passed through Mrs. Brook's astonished mind was, that her husband, in looking for

the book, must have been seized with disgust at Rosa's untidiness, and have taken this means of showing his opinion of it. But the matter was more serious than this.

"Look at that," said Mr. Brook, and he presented his wife with a small scrap of torn paper.

Mrs. Brook looked at it, and could read the word "shoes," and part of the figure "2."

"What is it?" she asked.

"Dawson's bill," replied her husband, "or rather a part of it; where the rest is we had better ask Rosa. I suspected her from the first," he added, "only, as you say, I have a way of leaving money about, and I thought it possible I might have made a mistake. I meant to have kept my eye on the girl, but I should not have said any more about this bill. I thought that even if she had taken the money, there would have been no way of proving it; of course she would have destroyed the paper. So she had, but not quite so cleverly as she thought, for, on opening the cookery-book, a little scrap of paper fell upon the table, and my eye caught sight of what looked to me just like Dawson's handwriting. A closer look showed me that it *was* Dawson's, and I felt sure it was a scrap of the missing bill. I have turned everything inside out,

in the hope of finding some more bits, but I have not found any. I think this book must have been lying open when she tore up the bill, and this bit must have fallen on it; most likely she threw the rest into the fire, and shut this one into the book when she put it away. But, if I have not found the bill, I have found something else. Count that money," and Mr. Brook pushed a little broken tea-pot towards his wife, out of which he emptied some silver, two crowns, two half-crowns, one shilling, two sixpences, and twopence. "The very money I had packed up for Dawson."

"Where *did* you find it?" exclaimed Mrs. Brook.

"In that little tea-pot, well hid behind a jar, on the top shelf of the dresser. Now what do you think about the girl's being 'honesty itself'? To-morrow we will have a further examination. I don't doubt we shall find some more treasures."

Mrs. Brook was extremely anxious that the further examination should take place that night, that moment, indeed, but Mr. Brook said Rosa had given him quite enough occupation for one day; he would go to bed now, and set to work again to-morrow. Rosa could not be beforehand with them, for the kitchen-door was always locked on the outside at night, for greater

safety, and Rosa had to come in the morning to ask her mistress for the key.

Mr. and Mrs. Brook talked a great deal about the wickedness of servants in general, and of their servant in particular; how there was no trusting them, and those that seemed to be the best often turned out to be the worst. "So kind as they had been to the girl, too; it was shameful, disgraceful, no punishment was too bad for her." But nothing was said about the *sin* which Rosa had committed, or what a dreadful thing it was to see a young girl so lost to the fear of God. Mr. and Mrs. Brook did not know or fear God themselves, and therefore they did not care whether their servant offended Him or not. They only thought of the offence committed against *themselves*, though this, in reality, was but a secondary consideration.

The next morning, when Rosa woke, she remembered the visit her mistress had paid her in the night, and as she dressed, she reflected on the "lucky escape" she had had. "If missus were not so soft," she said, "she wouldn't have believed me so quick. But lor! she believes anything I say, and master, he believes anything she says, and so between them I get along pretty comfortably. The first day as ever I wore the cap-ribbon I took so cleverly, if missus did not come

into the kitchen by one door just as I came in by the other, and if she didn't see the ribbon in a minute, and ask me if ever that could be the same she gave me Christmas-day, and which I had worn so much. What could I say but that I had sponged it, and ironed it, and set it up quite new; and if she did not believe every word of it, and even tell master afterwards what a clever, saving girl I was, and how I turned old things out like new! And if *he* did not believe it too! Like new, indeed!" And Rosa went downstairs to light the kitchen fire, laughing to herself at the remembrance of her own cleverness. Great was her surprise when, on knocking at her mistress's door, it was opened to her by her mistress herself, dressed, and with the key of the kitchen in her hand.

"I'm up early, you see, Rosa," she said. Rosa's heart misgave her. "I want something out of the kitchen," she added, as they went along the passage together, "a little broken tea-pot that stands on the top of the dresser."

Rosa's heart failed her altogether. For once her cleverness did *not* come to her aid. She was still thinking what she could do, when they reached the kitchen, and her mistress, unlocking the door, went in. At the sight of all the things upon the table, Rosa's

remaining courage gave way, and she turned so pale and faint, that she had to lean against a chair for support.

"It is useless to attempt to deceive any longer," said her mistress; "you had better confess all. You will be in the hands of the police within an hour."

Rosa fell upon her knees to implore for mercy, and, in the hope of obtaining it, she confessed everything, even things which she had done before she entered Mrs. Brook's service. But her confessions were of no avail. Mr. Brook was determined, and Rosa Carter went to prison. There, for the first time, Rosa heard the great truths of the Bible explained to her. The clergyman who visited the jail, greatly shocked at seeing so young a girl sunk so far in vice, strove to lead her to a sense of her sin, and his efforts were not in vain. Before Rosa left the jail she was heard to confess that the most happy "escape" she had ever had in her life was the discovery which had been made that night; for, if she had not been discovered then, her next step in sin would doubtless have been a still deeper one; and thus would she have gone on from worse to worse, until, she trembled to think where her career might have ended.

Rosa Carter's character was gone. She could

never hope to get a good situation again; and if it had not been for the clergyman who proved so true a friend to her, it is most likely she never would have found a situation at all. But he interested himself in her behalf, and at length found a place for her, where she lived many years. But Rosa could never forget the sin and misery of her younger days, and often would she strive to impress upon others the danger of yielding to first temptations. "If you begin by a little sin," she would say, "you will soon go on to a greater; and though it may seem to you that you are often lucky in escaping discovery, sooner or later you may be sure that *your sin will find you out;* and even if it should not do so in this world, it assuredly will at the last great day of reckoning, and then there will be no such thing as escape."

EDWIN'S MISFORTUNES; OR, WHO'S TO BLAME?

A MOST unfortunate boy was Edwin Morley, or at all events, a most unfortunate boy he thought himself. He was always getting into trouble. Some one or other was always finding fault with him. No sooner was he out of one scrape than he fell into another. If a visitor came to the house, it generally happened that Edwin was in disgrace, and unable to see him. If a party of pleasure took place, it was often the case that Edwin could not be allowed to go to it, in consequence of some act of bad behaviour on his part. There were beautiful prizes given at his school every half-year, but Edwin had never yet brought home one. There was a good conduct book in which all the boys who had conducted themselves well had the pleasure of seeing their names entered every Saturday morning before the school was dis-

missed. Poor Edwin's name had never yet found its way into that delightful book. There was also a bad behaviour book, where the boys who were careless and disobedient had their names written also, with a great *B.* after them. Scarcely a week passed without Edwin's name appearing in this book. Saturday was a half-holiday at school, but the boys who were entered in the "Black Book," as it was called, were not allowed to run merrily home, or play with the others, but were shut up all the afternoon in the schoolroom, with long impositions to learn. Consequently, it was not many half-holidays that poor Edwin got. Saturday after Saturday, when all the other boys were out in the woods, knocking down the nuts by the dozen with their caps and sticks, and making the place ring with their shouts, Edwin might be seen sitting on a high wooden stool in the dull schoolroom with his book in his hand, and the sound of the other boys' voices outside, making it more difficult than ever for him to keep his eyes fixed upon the page before him. His poor eyes! they were often red and swollen, and his copybooks, and dictionaries, and grammars were, one and all of them, blistered with the stains of the tears that had so constantly fallen upon them. For Edwin Morley was, as we say, a most

unfortunate little boy. And on the day when our present story begins, he had been most especially unfortunate.

His troubles began at home, quite early in the morning, before breakfast. The evening before, when he and his little sisters were going to bed, and had come to wish their father good night—for they had no mother, perhaps if they had had one, some of Edwin's misfortunes might never have happened, but she had died when he was only three years old, and he could barely remember her,—well, when they had gone to say good night to their father, his last words to them had been, "Now, children, I have an order to give you. Mind, if you run out in the garden to-morrow morning before breakfast, you are none of you to go near the cucumber-frames."

"Very well, father," said Jane and Ellen. And very well it proved for them. But not so for poor Edwin.

"I wonder why father won't let me go near the cucumber-frames," he thought to himself, as he was undressing in his little room. "I go there every day. Father often sends me there himself to open the frames, or water the plants. I wonder why I mustn't go there to-morrow."

"I wonder why," was a very favourite expression of Edwin's. And I am afraid it is so with many other little boys. It often brought poor Edwin into trouble. And I believe it often brings other children into trouble too.

The last thought that occupied Edwin's mind before he fell asleep was, "I wonder why I mustn't go near the frames."

And when he woke in the morning, the first thought that came into his mind was, "I wonder why I mustn't go near those frames." And after "wondering why" all the time he was dressing, the temptation came into his mind to go and find out this great secret. It was true his father had forbidden it, "But perhaps," Edwin said to himself,—for when little children, and indeed grown up people too, wish very much to do something which they know they ought not to do, they often manage to find some excuse for doing it,—"perhaps father only meant it for the girls. They are younger than I am, and if it's anything dangerous they migh get hurt. But it's quite different for me. I know how to take care of myself. If Jane and Ellen had not been there, I dare say father wouldn't have forbidden *my* going. I don't believe he'll mind if *I* go."

Edwin did not, however, think proper to consult his father as to whether he would mind it or not. And somehow or other, when at length he determined to go and find out for himself what there was to be seen at the cucumber-frames, he took particular care that his father should not see him go. For he stole softly past his father's door, and went round the back way into the garden, straight up to the cucumber-frames. There certainly was something there! For right behind the frames a wooden paling had been put up. Edwin tried to peep through, but the boards were too closely nailed together for him to see anything.

What could it be? He wondered more than ever now! It was impossible to go back without finding out. So if he could not peep through the boards, he positively must peep over them.

They were rather high, but Edwin was a good hand at climbing, and he saw one or two big nails which he thought would help him. So he planted his foot on the top of the highest cucumber-frame, and then climbed up, with some difficulty, to the top of the paling. Over he peeped; but, just as he did so, almost before he had time to see that the great wonder was only a couple of bee-hives, he found himself attacked by a swarm of bees, who flew straight into

his face. Frightened by this sudden attack, and scarcely knowing what he did, poor Edwin let go his hold of the paling, and down he fell straight into his father's largest cucumber-frame, smashing the glasses, breaking the plants, and cutting his hands! He was all cut and bleeding, but he did not care for that. All he thought of, as he scrambled out, was his father's anger. He felt so frightened, that his first feeling was to run away; but before he had had time to reflect upon what a very silly thing this would be for a little boy to do who had nowhere to run to, who should come up but his father himself, who had been just coming down to his breakfast, when he heard the smash, and ran out to see what was the matter; though he guessed at once that it was his disobedient little son who had been at the cucumber-frames.

Of course Edwin was flogged; of course he had only a piece of dry bread for breakfast; and, when he set off for school, his father told him that, if he continued much longer the same course of disobedience which he had so long practised, he should soon be obliged to send him away from home altogether.

That morning at school was a very unfortunate one. Edwin could not write, his cut hands hurt so much. His master found fault with his writing, and Edwin

dared not lay the blame upon his painful hands, for that would have led to an inquiry as to how the hands had been cut. So he submitted patiently to fresh punishment. And, that day being Saturday, his name was again entered into the "Black Book" with a big *B.* after it; and he was sentenced to pass the afternoon in the schoolroom. A dreary afternoon it was to him, although it was just the contrary to the other boys; for they had all gone on a long-promised blackberry hunt to a neighbouring wood, and the sun was shining so brightly that there was no doubt but that they would have a very pleasant expedition. But the thought of their happiness only served to make poor Edwin yet more miserable than he had been before. He was all alone, too! No other boys had been kept in, and for two long weary hours Edwin sat alone on his high stool in the dull schoolroom. One hour yet remained to be spent there; and Edwin, having learnt his task, got down from his stool, and went to the window to pass the time in looking out upon the school-yard, though he did not expect to see anything more entertaining than a few sparrows hopping about. He was mistaken, however; for he had not been five minutes at the open window when a gentleman passed by, and, seeing Edwin, he asked him if this was not

Mr. Morton's school. Edwin said "Yes," and then the gentleman asked if Mr. Morton were at home? Edwin said "No, he was not;" and the gentleman, seemingly much disappointed, asked if he soon would be?

"No," Edwin said, "I think not for a long time, for he has taken all the boys out blackberrying in Nutwood."

"That is unfortunate for me," said the gentleman, "for I have walked over from Elderston to see him. But you, my little boy," he added, "how comes it that you are here by yourself? Why have not you gone with the rest?"

Poor Edwin coloured crimson; but he had never told a lie, and—hard as it was to own the truth—he would not do so now.

"I could not go, sir," he replied, in rather a stammering voice. "I—I—Mr. Morton would not let me."

Edwin expected the gentleman would look very stern at hearing this; but, to his great surprise, he looked kinder than before.

"You were kept in?" he said.

"Yes," said Edwin.

"Poor boy!" said the gentleman.

There was more of pity than of blame in his voice. He spoke so kindly that Edwin burst into tears. The gentleman put his hand on the little curly head that was bent down on the window-sill, and said very gently—

"Poor boy! I'm afraid you are not very happy to-day."

Edwin cried the more.

"Come," said the gentleman, "crying won't mend the matter. Tell me all about it. I have a little boy just about your age, and he always tells me when he is in trouble. Come, let me hear what's the matter with you to-day." And he raised Edwin's head with his hand.

"It isn't only to-day," said Edwin; "it's *always*."

"Always?" said the gentleman. "What, always in trouble? Well, that is a bad business, certainly! Do you know, I came over here on purpose to see about my little boy's coming to this school; but I should not like to think he was going to be always unhappy. Are *all* the boys in this school equally miserable?"

Edwin looked up at this. "No," he said, "not all."

"Well, are *many* of them?" asked the gentleman.

"No," said Edwin, "not many."

"Come," said the gentleman, "I'm glad of that. Now, let me hear who are the happy boys. We'll talk about the miserable ones afterwards. Let me hear who you consider the happiest fellow in all the school."

"Oh, Charley Grainger," replied Edwin, quickly.

"And pray why do you think Charley Grainger so particularly happy?" asked the gentleman.

"Oh," said Edwin, "he gets all the prizes; he's generally top of the class. Everybody likes him; all the masters are kind to him. He's Mr. Morton's favourite, and he's favourite with most all the boys, too."

"Yes," said the gentleman, "I believe he is. And now, shall I tell you something about Charley, besides all you have told me? He lives at home, does he? or boards here?"

"At home," said Edwin, "with his mother. He hasn't got any father."

"Well, then," said the gentleman, "Charley is a good son to his mother. He obeys her and respects her. When he is at home, he learns his lessons carefully, and brings them to school well known. When he is in school, he gives his mind to what he is about; never plays, or wastes his time. He is respectful to

his master, and always kind and obliging to his companions, and so he is a favourite with them all."

"You know him?" said Edwin, quickly.

"I have never seen him in all my life," replied the gentleman.

Edwin looked up with surprise.

"You have heard about him?" he asked.

"Oh yes," said the gentleman, "I have heard about him, and what's more, I think I have heard about you too; I have read about you both in a book I have at home."

Edwin looked yet more astonished! It was not possible that there could be anything written about either him or Charley in a book, a real printed book! The gentleman must be joking! And yet he did not seem at all as if he were. He spoke so gravely, and there was such a look of truth upon his face. "Yes," he said, remarking Edwin's look of wonder; "and I believe you have the same book here with you in this very room, only perhaps you don't know quite as much about it as I do. Have you not got a Bible here?"

"Oh yes," said Edwin, "there's one on the desk. But won't you come in, sir?" he asked, all his tears having quite disappeared, and his face being much brighter than Edwin Morley's face was generally seen

to look; "there's no one here but me and the servants; but won't you come in and wait for Mr. Morton?"

"I think I will," said the gentleman, but to Edwin's satisfaction, he declined the proposal that he should go into the parlour, where Edwin would not have felt himself at liberty to accompany him, and preferred taking a seat in the large schoolroom, where he again asked for a Bible. Edwin brought him one, feeling almost sure it could not be in *that* book that there was anything written about either him or Charley, and yet somewhat puzzled by the gentleman's manner.

"Now," said the gentleman, "can you find out the first chapter of the prophet Isaiah?"

But this was beyond Edwin's powers. He was only eight years old, and he did not know much about the Bible; if he had, perhaps he would not have fallen into so many misfortunes. So the gentleman found the place for him, and when it was found, Edwin could read the verses very correctly. They were the nineteenth and twentieth, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"Read the last words over again," said the gentleman.

And Edwin read them, "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"Yes," said the gentleman. "You know who wrote the Bible?"

"Yes," said Edwin, "God."

"And in this Bible which God wrote, and which is therefore every word of it true, He tells us there are two sorts of people in the world, those who are '*willing and obedient,*' like the first people you read about just now, and those who '*refuse and rebel,*' like the second people you read about. That was why I said I had heard about Charley in my book. I think, indeed I'm nearly sure, he is one of the first sort, one of those who are 'willing and obedient.'"

"Yes," said Edwin, "I think he is."

"And shall I tell you to *whom* he is willing and obedient?"

Edwin was all attention.

"To the Lord Jesus Christ," said the gentleman. "You think Charley is quite different from you, don't you?"

"Yes," said Edwin, "quite." And poor Edwin's tone was very humble.

"Well, I will tell you the only difference which there is between you," continued the gentleman. "When children are born they are all alike, remember that, my boy; they have all got the same sort of hearts, wicked, proud, rebellious hearts that don't love God and won't obey Him; no, and *can't* obey Him. Well, to all these children the Lord Jesus Christ says the same thing, '*Come unto Me.*' He tells them that they have all sinned against God, and that God is angry with them for their sins, but that if they will only come to Him, He will wash away all their sins in his own blood, and then He will give them his Holy Spirit to enable them to do what is right, and refuse to do what is wrong. Now if these children, or these people, for it's just the same with grown-up people as it is with children—if they are '*willing*' to come to Jesus, and be '*obedient*' to Him, He will forgive their sins, and give them new hearts, and then, do you remember what is said, in the end of the verse, '*they shall eat the good of the land,*' that means, they shall be happy in this world now, and a great deal happier in heaven hereafter. I believe, Edwin, this is the secret of your little companion's happiness. And now I think we may see too what is the secret of your unhappiness. I am afraid, my little boy, you have not

been 'willing' to hear the voice of Jesus, nor 'obedient' to his voice when He has spoken. I am afraid you have been one of those children who 'refuse' to listen to Jesus, and 'rebel' against his words, and this is why you are not a happy boy."

"No one ever told me about listening to Jesus," said Edwin, sorrowfully; "they tell me I am always naughty, and try to make me good, but they never told me about Jesus."

The gentleman looked very grave. "I think, however," he said, "that it is only hearing about Jesus that will do you any good. Do you want to be good now?" he asked.

"Yes, very much," said Edwin.

"Then take my advice and go and tell Jesus so. You feel that you are a naughty boy, and always have been naughty. Tell Jesus this, and ask Him to forgive all your sins, and to take away your naughty heart, and give you a new one; would you like me to ask this for you?"

"Yes, very much," said Edwin. And he gladly knelt by the gentleman's side while he offered up a short prayer for the poor little boy who never could be happy because he could never help being naughty. The clock struck four before the gentleman had finished

talking, and Edwin would have been glad to remain much longer with so kind a friend, but the gentleman sent him home with a few parting words of kindness and advice. Home he went, and the first thing he did was to go and ask his father's forgiveness, not only for that morning's offence, but for all his many acts of disobedience, then kneeling in his little room he repeated the short prayer which had been taught him, "O Jesus, for thy mercy's sake, forgive all my sins, and give me thy Holy Spirit." That night the prayer was repeated again, and every night and morning ever afterwards, and from that day Edwin's misfortunes came to an end. From being the worst boy, he came to be one of the best boys in the school, and not even Charley Grainger was more attentive to his lessons, more orderly in his behaviour, more obedient to his parent and masters, or more kind and obliging to his playfellows than was the once unfortunate, but now happy little Edwin Morley.

HOW TO SPEND A HAPPY DAY.

THIS was just what Laura Wilmot wanted to know. It was a question which had often puzzled her. This very morning, when all her lessons were over, and her daily governess had put on her bonnet, and wished her good-bye, leaving her to spend the rest of the day in amusing herself as she best liked, Laura had stood at the schoolroom window for ever so long, wondering what in the world she should do with herself, and at length she had arrived at the certainly not very pleasant conclusion that she was by no means a happy little girl—not half so happy, she thought, as the other children of her acquaintance.

There were the little Carters who lived in the opposite house. Like herself, they had lost that greatest of all earthly blessings, a kind and loving mother; but then they were three sisters together, all nearly of the same age, and of course they could

never feel dull or lonely as she did. Then there was Ellen Rutland, who lived next door. She was an only daughter also, but she had two elder brothers who always seemed to be very kind to her, and to do so much to amuse her. And Margaret Winter, she was, like herself, an only child, but then she had a dear mamma, whose constant little companion she was; of course Margaret could not be anything but happy. And Janet Manners, she had no sisters either, but her mamma allowed her to go to school, and she found plenty of nice companions there.

Laura wished her papa would send her to school, for then perhaps she should not find the days so long and dull as they were now. This very day, for instance; she did not in the least know how it was to be spent. The morning had been dull enough, for Laura had no love for her lessons; but the long afternoon threatened to be a great deal more dull still. She did not know how in the world she should find occupation for its weary hours. She looked at her little bookcase with the idea of sitting down to read, but she knew all her books so well, she did not care about reading them over again. Then she thought of getting her workbox, and making a new frock for her doll, for Laura was a very neat little

worker, and could sew very nicely when she chose, but then she remembered that her doll had more frocks already than there were days in the week, and she did not see the use of making her any more.

So after thinking first of one thing and then of another, and not being able to come to any decision at all, or to fix upon any occupation which would be likely to afford her any amusement, Laura wandered listlessly out of the schoolroom, and found her way into the dining-room.

There she was, standing at the window, looking idly at the people passing along the street, when her aunt came into the room, and seeing Laura there doing nothing, asked her to run upstairs for her, and bring her down a book which she had left upon her dressing-table.

Laura started at the sound of her aunt's voice, for she had almost forgotten that there was such a person in the house. Mrs. Granville had only arrived the evening before, and Laura had scarcely seen her before she went to bed. She had never seen this aunt before, and she had not thought very much about her, or felt any very great pleasure in hearing from her papa that she was coming to spend a fort-

night with them. She had one other aunt who came to see them sometimes, and she had never taken any notice of Laura further than kissing her every night and morning, and occasionally sending her on a message, and Laura had taken it for granted that one aunt would be like another, and that it would make very little difference to her whether Mrs. Granville was staying in the house or not.

But something in Aunt Granville's manner now made Laura fancy that perhaps she had been mistaken. The sweet, pleasant voice in which she asked her little niece to run upstairs for her made Laura feel as if she would gladly run to the other end of the town, instead of only upstairs. It was so pleasant to be spoken to in such a kind tone. The very sound of such a voice, and the sight of her aunt's cheerful face, made Laura herself feel brighter than she had done before, and she ran quickly up the stairs to her aunt's room, wondering meanwhile whether, if her mamma were alive, she would be like her aunt Granville; and thinking that, if she were, her home would certainly not be so dull as it was now.

The book Laura had been sent for was lying, as her aunt had said, open upon the dressing-table.

She took it up, and her eyes fell upon these words, "How to Spend a Happy Day." It was just what Laura had been wanting to know, and she felt very much inclined to read on a little further, when she heard her aunt calling her, and asking whether she could find the book; and running downstairs she gave it into her aunt's hands, but she could not forget the words she had seen in it.

Her aunt went away with the book, and Laura remained standing at the window, apparently engaged in looking at the passers-by. But she was not thinking about them; she was thinking of the words she had seen in the book her aunt had sent her to fetch—"How to Spend a Happy Day." What a strange book it must be! She could not imagine what it could be about, but she should very much like to know how to spend a happy day. She thought so much about it that at length she determined she would ask her aunt to let her have another look at the book which she had been sent to fetch in the morning; and so she did that same evening, when she came down into the dining-room as usual after her tea, and found her papa and her aunt sitting together at dessert.

Great was Laura's disappointment when her aunt told her that she was very sorry she could not grant

"She felt very much inclined to read on a little further."

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her request, for she had just sent the book away to a friend. "But what can you want to see in it, Laura?" her aunt asked; "it is not exactly the book I should have fancied a little girl like you would have cared about. What did you want with it?"

Laura hesitated and blushed so crimson that her aunt did not press the question then; but afterwards, when she and Laura were seated together in the drawing-room, she drew her little niece to her side, and said, "Will you tell me now, Laura dear, what it was you wanted to see in that book?"

And Laura, emboldened by her aunt's kindness to speak freely, said, "I wanted to know how to spend a happy day, and I saw something about it in that book."

"And don't you know how to spend a happy day, Laura?" her aunt asked. "Surely you are too young yet to have your days troubled much with care or sorrow. I don't think you look very unhappy."

"No, aunt," said Laura, "I know I'm not unhappy, but I think a great many girls of my age are much happier than I am. My days always seem so dull; I never know what to do with myself all day."

"And so," said her aunt, "you wanted to know what that book said on the subject. I don't think I can tell you all it said, or that you would understand

it if I could, but one thing I will tell you, and it is quite within your comprehension and your power also, and that is, Laura dear, that to make a day happy to ourselves we must make it happy to somebody else."

"What do you mean, aunt?" Laura asked.

"Only this, Laura," her aunt replied, "that no one can live for himself alone and be happy."

"But who have I got to live for, aunt?" asked Laura. "No one wants anything of a little girl like me; I can't be of any use to any one."

"Cannot you?" said her aunt, "then you are the only little girl I know in the world who cannot. Let me see. Have you not got two hands, and two feet, and eyes, and ears like the rest of the little girls I have met with?"

"Of course I have, aunt; but what good are they to anybody except myself?"

"I don't know that they are any use at all, Laura," said Mrs. Granville; "indeed, I am inclined to think from what you say that they are not, but I know very well of what use they *might* be."

"Oh, aunt, please tell me," exclaimed Laura.

"Well, to begin with the hands that seem to want occupation so much; you can work, I suppose? most little girls of eleven know something about work."

"Oh, yes," Laura replied; "I can sew, and hem, and stitch a little. Miss Wilson says I work very well for my age."

"Well," said her aunt, "I saw a little girl this morning in your papa's kitchen who was all in rags, and I have promised her to make her a set of new clothes during the time I am here; perhaps you might help me?"

"I should like it very much, aunt," said Laura; and her face was brighter already at the thought of it.

"And you can read, Laura?" said her aunt; to which Laura replied, "Of course."

"Well, that little girl told me she had a blind grandmother, who lives quite close to us. Susan says they are most respectable people. I am going to read to the old woman to-morrow, and you can come with me, and if you like, you can go on visiting her when I am gone, and employ some of your dull hours in reading to her."

Laura's face was brighter still.

"And are there any other things I can do, aunt? nobody ever told me before that I could do anything at all."

"So many things, Laura dear," replied her aunt,

"that it would be impossible to tell you them all before your bedtime came, but to-morrow we will begin together, and see if we cannot make our days happier to ourselves by trying to make them happier to other people."

And so they did. Mrs. Granville was a kind teacher; Laura was a willing pupil. Instead of three weeks her aunt remained three months, and before she left Laura had learned, instead of thinking only of herself, to find her happiness in doing all sorts of things for all sorts of people; working for those who could not work for themselves; reading to the poor and sick, and doing all in her power to help both within her own house and without also. And from that day until the present, Laura has never known what it was to feel *dull*, or to be unable to discover *how to spend a happy day*.

DUST.

Little Janet Seagrove sat on a low stool by the fire in her mother's sick-room. A book lay upon her lap, from which she had been reading aloud several hymns; but her mother's head ached too much for her to continue reading any longer, and she was sitting very quietly, with her large thoughtful eyes fixed upon the coals.

Janet was thinking—not as most little girls think, about their playthings, or their story-books—but grave, serious thoughts, such thoughts as were often in Janet's mind now, when her mother lay all day long upon the sick-bed which the doctor had said she must never hope to leave until she should be carried from it, and laid in the quiet grave in the village churchyard. Janet's father lay in that same churchyard, and her only little sister lay by his side, and her mother was all that she had left to her in the world, so that it was no

wonder that Janet had a graver look upon her face, and a deeper tone in her voice, than little girls of ten years old are generally seen to have. When her mother should be dead—and it was easy now to see that that sad time was not far off—Janet's home would be with an aunt whom she had scarcely ever known, but who she did not think would be at all like her mother, because she talked loud, and seemed fond of finding fault and complaining of other people.

This aunt had been to see them only the day before, and Janet was thinking about her now, and of the last words which she had heard her say to her mother before taking leave—

"Don't you fret about the child. I tell you she shall live with me, and I'll see to her having all she wants."

The words had been kind, but the tone was rough; and Janet was thinking over it now, and wondering whether it would be possible for her ever to live away from her own dear mother, or learn to love that rough-speaking aunt.

Meanwhile the servant-maid was engaged in dusting the bed-room, and any one could see how much she also loved and valued her mistress by the quiet way in which she moved about her sick-room, putting the

furniture in its place with a careful hand, and noiselessly moving the different books and ornaments.

"I am afraid I disturb you, ma'am," she said, seeing that Mrs. Seagrove was not asleep, but was lying with her eyes fixed upon her child.

"No, Hannah, not at all," said her mistress; "and even if you did, I should not mind. I am sure you could not go about your work more quietly, and," she added, with a smile, "the room must be dusted, you know."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the maid, "the dust gets everywhere, more's the pity. My mother used often to say to me when I was at home, that dust was like sin, it was everywhere."

"Your mother was right, Hannah," said Mrs. Seagrove. "I am glad to see that you remember her words. She was one of the truest Christians I ever met with, and always had a useful word for every occasion, however humble."

"She had, indeed, ma'am," said Hannah, with a sigh of fond remembrance; "and that about the dust I remember so well, because it comes like to my own work, and I often think of it when I'm busy dusting."

Mrs. Seagrove did not say anything more about the dust, nor did Hannah; but their words had given a

new direction to little Janet's thoughts. She did not think any more about her aunt. She thought about the dust, which the maid was removing with careful hands, and of how Hannah's mother had said that it was "like sin, it was everywhere."

Janet thought so long about this, that after the maid had left the room, her mother remarked the thoughtful look on her little girl's face, and calling her to the bedside, asked her "what she was so busy thinking about."

"About what Hannah said," she answered, "about the dust being like sin."

"It was a new thought to my little girl," said her mother; "it is a striking one too. I have been thinking about it myself since she said it. So you see, Janet dear, you and I have had the same thoughts, and if you like we will talk about them a little now."

"Not if it makes your head ache more, dear mother," said Janet, anxiously.

Her mother smiled, and placed her hand fondly on her child's head.

"It will not hurt me to talk a little," she said; "I am rested now, and I shall like to see whether my little girl and I have been thinking the same thoughts

about the same thing. What were you thinking about Hannah's speech, Janet?"

"I thought it was true, mother," she replied, "that sin is, like dust, everywhere. There is no getting rid of it, I think."

"Not quite that, Janet," said her mother. "You know Hannah removed the dust."

"Yes," said Janet, a little sorrowfully, "but it will come again. It is beginning to come now. I can see it settling on the chimney-piece, and on that little table near the fire, and by and by it will be quite thick again."

"And then," continued her mother, "Hannah will take it away again. I think, Janet, there is a special lesson in this. Does my little girl see it?"

"I think I do, mother. You mean that sin will come again, but that we must not let it remain."

"Yes, Janet," said her mother, "sin will come. You can no more keep it out of you than you can prevent the dust from settling again upon the same place from which it has been removed. Sin is in us, and all around us; but we must not, we dare not, let it remain. Janet, my darling child, do you know the only way in which we can remove it from us, or rather, the only Person who can remove it *for* us?"

"You mean Jesus, mother," said Janet.

"Yes, Janet. Only Jesus can take away the sin from us; He takes away all our sins; every day we commit fresh sin, and if we go to Him, He will remove it; and if not——?"

"Then," said Janet, "it will lie as thickly upon us as the dust on the ground."

"Yes," said her mother, "and we have no more power in ourselves to get rid of our sins, than have those chairs and tables which Hannah has been so carefully dusting, the power in themselves to free themselves from dust, and appear clean and bright. It would be very silly, very absurd in us to expect them to do it, wouldn't it?"

Janet smiled. "Yes, very," she said.

"And *why* would it be so absurd?"

"Why, mother, because of course they couldn't. Dead things have no power, they can't have, they have not any life to give it them."

"Exactly," said her mother, "you have put my thoughts into your own words. Dead things have no power. They cannot have any. For life gives power, and they have no life. And we, Janet, have we life, spiritual life, in ourselves, of ourselves?"

Janet remembered a verse she had learnt only the Sunday before, at the Sunday-school, and she knew what to answer.

"No, mother, I learnt that on Sunday, in the first verse of the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. 'And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.'"

"Dead," said her mother, earnestly; "it is a solemn word, but a very true one. We should never forget it. We are all dead in heavenly things, we have no more power than any other dead thing. So that what is done in us must be done for us, by another hand than ours, by the hand of Jesus."

There was a short silence, and Janet was almost afraid to speak first, so fearful was she always of causing that dear mother one moment's fatigue, but she went on thinking, and when Mrs. Seagrove asked her what she was thinking about, she said, "still about the dust."

"And what about it?" her mother asked.

"Only, mamma, that I wondered people did not do with themselves, as old Mrs. Grant does with almost every thing she has in the world, hide it up out of the way of all danger."

Her mother smiled. "So many people do, Janet.

It is a new thought to you, but it is one which has come into many other people's minds, and led them to go and hide themselves away from the place where God meant them to live; and shall I tell you what has happened to them in consequence? Pretty much the same thing that has happened to most of old Mrs. Grant's best things. I went in there one day when she had been opening one of her treasured boxes, and there I saw several good dresses and other things which she had put away out of sight, in order that they might not be spoiled, and they had all been ruined by must and damp. No, no, Janet, my child, people can't keep themselves from evil by hiding out of its way. For the evil is *in* them, and where they go they carry it with them, and if it does not take one shape, it takes another.

"But this is rather beyond your understanding, now, my little Janet. Only remember this, that God made you to live with your fellow-creatures, and do your daily work amongst them, and the dust that falls upon you must be removed by the only Hand that has the power to remove it. And now, dear child, I do feel tired, you may leave me to rest, and go for a walk to the village. I should like to know how poor Dame Stevens is."

Janet kissed her mother, put on her hat and cloak, and set off. She did not think much about her dress that day for her thoughts were full of other things, but when she left the little cottage and came out into the bright light of the clear winter afternoon, her little black frock looked so dusty that she knew her neat, careful mother would not like her to be seen in the village with it, and she returned to brush it carefully. As she did so, she thought again of Hannah's speech about the dust. It was strange to see what a hold that speech had taken of little Janet's mind.

She went up to the village, paid a visit to poor Dame Stevens, whom she found so weak and failing that when she said that it grieved her old heart sore not to be able to see the face of the dear friend who had been so kind to her for so many years, good Mrs. Seagrove, poor little Janet thought to herself that it might not be long before the old woman would be for ever in her mother's company in heaven, while she herself should be left in loneliness upon earth. But she could not make up her mind to say so to Dame Stevens, although it might perhaps have been a comfort to her to hear it. "My mother is very ill, too," was all she could summon courage to say;

"the doctor thinks her much worse these last days." Janet's voice trembled, and the tears were in her eyes.

"Poor thing," said the old woman tenderly; and holding out her two withered hands, she took Janet's little soft hand fondly within them. "Poor thing; it's not your mother I mean," she added, "for there'll be no need for us to pity her, Janet. She's served her Saviour this many a year. Her faith in his love has never been shaken, although she has had a many sorrows to bear, and hard ones too. And now He's going to take her to Himself, to that better world where there won't be any more call for faith. It will be all turned to sight there, Janet, all turned to sight. We shall see the Lord in his glory then, your mother and I. There will be no need to pity us. But you, my poor little Janet, my old heart feels sore for you; it does indeed."

Janet's courage gave way then, and she burst into tears.

"There," said Dame Stevens, "I did not mean to make you worse. I ought not to have said it. I might have known it would upset your poor little sorrowful heart. I can't ask you to forget it, because I know this is just one of those sorrows that there's no

forgetting. But you take it all to Jesus, my poor darling. There's more than fifty years—more than fifty years, Janet, and that's a long time, mind you, to prove the love of any friend—there's more than fifty years that I've been in the habit of carrying all my troubles to Jesus, and I've never had a trouble yet that He has not been able, yes, and willing too, to cure. Take Him all the sin, Janet. Take Him all the sorrow. He will bear it all for you, sin and sorrow too. And you can't bear either of them yourself, remember that. And so good-bye, my child, and may God bless and keep you. He's a Father to all, a good and tender Father; but they that are orphans are his children in particular, them as He watches over with a special love. You'll remember that, Janet?"

Janet did remember it. She left old Dame Stevens that afternoon, and never saw her afterwards. The old woman died the next day, but her words lived after her, lived long far down in little Janet's mind, where they had sunk deep and taken firm root.

When she returned home, she found her mother much weaker even than she had been that morning; yet when Janet proposed that she should remain quiet, she said, "No; she would prefer having her little daughter with her; she felt restless and

uneasy, and it would do her good to talk quietly to her."

So Janet took her little stool, and sat down by the bedside, with her hand fast locked in her mother's. And first she told her that she had not forgotten about the "dust," and how she had thought of it when she had gone out into the road, and seen how dusty her black frock looked.

"You did not remark it in the house, Janet," said Mrs. Seagrove.

"No, mother," she replied; "it is so dark in the house, especially now the bushes in front have grown so tall. The sun can't shine through them, and so we can't see very well indoors."

"And is there not a lesson in this, dear Janet?" said her mother. "Is it not like sin in this also? For how often are not our sins hidden from our sight by the things of this world, which rise before our eyes and hide from us the light of God's truth. Remember this too, Janet darling—if you wish to see your sins as God sees them, you must bring them out into the light of his word; you must let the Sun of Righteousness shine upon them. Oh, Janet, my child, it is when our eyes have been opened to see the Saviour that we know that we are sinners, and earnestly long to have

our sins removed, and feel how hateful and how shameful they are. Pray always that your eyes may be opened by the power of God to see sin as it is, and Jesus as He is, and that you may have grace given you to seek to have the sin removed by the one hand that can alone remove it. My child will remember her mother's words when she is gone, will she not?"

"Yes, mother, I will pray that I may," answered the weeping child; for something in her mother's voice told her that it would not be long now before it would speak no more—before that dear mother would be gone far away into the unknown land, where none can follow unbidden.

Nor was it long. That was the last conversation which little Janet Seagrove ever held with her mother. She went to bed that night with her heart more full than ever of loving thoughts of her, and earnest prayers that she might be able always to remember the words which she had heard that day; and the next morning, when she came downstairs, and met Hannah coming out of her mother's room, something in the faithful servant's face answered the question which was on her lips, before she had summoned courage to ask it.

"Oh, Hannah, she is not dead?" she exclaimed, clinging to Hannah's side, and crying as if her little heart would break.

"We won't speak about her being dead," said Hannah, tenderly raising her in her arms, and carrying her into the little parlour opposite. "Death is not the word I think of when I see her; it's life, my dear, it's just life eternal. That's what she longed for in this world, and now she has it in the presence of her Lord."

"But I?" sobbed the little orphan. "Oh, Hannah, what shall I do without her?"

"You must do as she did," replied Hannah; "look to the Lord Jesus, and trust in Him. He took care of her, and now that He has taken her to Himself, depend upon it He won't forget the child she has left behind."

"I knew she would soon die," said Janet, when she had become a little more composed; "I felt it yesterday, when she talked so much to me, but I did not think it would be so soon. She talked more than usual."

"We will remember her words," said Hannah, "they were about sin, and how we were to keep from it. She has gone now where sin can never come where her heart can never more be grieved by the

sight of it. Shall we not try so to live that one day we may hope to follow her?"

That was a mournful week at the little cottage. Janet's aunt came over to fulfil her promise of "seeing to the child," and poor Janet tried to be thankful to her for her kindness, but the rough voice sounded in strange contrast to her heart, with the soft tones to which she had been ever before accustomed, and many times would the little orphan steal away to the bed-room, and kneeling by the bed-side, pray with many tears that "Jesus would forgive her all her sins, and make her more resigned to his will."

The day on which little Janet's mother was laid in the churchyard was a very lovely one. Janet had not been outside the cottage for a week, and as she went out now, dressed in her deep mourning weeds, the sun shone full upon her black dress. It made her think of her mother's words about letting the beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon her in their beauty. Perhaps, she thought, if they were shining now upon her little darkened heart, it might be cheered and comforted, and she prayed that it might be so.

The silent procession wound its way quietly through the village, and many an eye that saw it was wet with

pity for the little orphan, who walked next the coffin, her hand fast locked in Hannah's. At the churchyard gate they met another funeral, and Janet caught sight of old Dame Stevens' son, with his little boy by his side. She knew that they were very sorrowful too, and it seemed to do her good to feel that she was not the only mourner. And then the old woman's words came into her mind, "May God bless and keep you. He's a Father to all, Janet, a good and tender Father, but they that are orphans are his children in particular."

They were the words, almost the prayer, of a dying saint. Janet could not do better than to treasure them up, together with her mother's parting words to her on the same evening. She prayed that she might never forget these last words of the two who had left her on the same day, who were now being laid in the grave together, and whose souls had gone to be for ever with the Lord.

In less than a week, Janet left the little cottage which had been the only home she had ever known, and went to live with the aunt who had promised to take care of her. We have not time to follow her history further now, but if our little readers care to hear more about her, they shall do so another day;

and then they will see that, though Janet found "dust" everywhere, she never forgot the advice which had been given her as to the only means of removing it.

THE BLIND GIRL.

A TRUE STORY.

In a lonely cot amongst the mountains of Switzerland lived a little girl. She was quite blind, and very poor, and yet she was very happy, a great deal happier than many children who are in possession of sight and riches, and all the comforts that this world can give. Her blindness could not prevent her from being happy, for though God had deprived her of sight, so that she could not see the green fields, nor the gay flowers, nor the bright sunshine, nor any of those fair sights which it gives other children so much pleasure to gaze upon, He had, in his mercy, enlightened the eyes of her understanding by the rays of his Holy Spirit, and it was given to her to see those heavenly things which far surpass in glory the very brightest of all the sights that earth can afford.

Often when her brothers and sisters were at play

together, wreathing daisy chains, or pursuing the gay mountain butterflies, or leaping from one rock to another, frightening the goats away to their hiding-places, and making the lonely hills ring with their merry laughter, this little girl would sit apart, unable to join in their wild play, and yet in all her blind loneliness, feeling as happy as the merriest among them, as she sat gazing with the eye of faith upon the heavenly prospects revealed to her by her Saviour. Neither could her poverty make her unhappy, for though God had seen fit to place her in a very humble state, and her parents were so poor that they were often unable to supply her with sufficient clothing to prevent her suffering from the intense cold of the bleak mountain air, yet God had given her a treasure in heaven, the possession of which filled her with such deep happiness and gratitude, that she scarcely felt the poverty which was her lot below. One thing alone was a real source of sorrow to the blind girl; one trial alone she found it hard to bear cheerfully, and with perfect submission to God's will. It was a daily, hourly source of grief to her that she could not read the Bible, that she was, by her blindness, shut out from communion with her Saviour through the means of his Holy Word.

In the lonely neighbourhood in which the blind girl lived there was no school. The few cottages that had been built amongst those mountains were far removed from each other, and were inhabited by shepherds, who even if there had been a school within their reach could not have sent their children to it; the elder ones were all employed in tending the sheep that grazed in the valleys, and in bringing home the cows from the mountain pastures, and the little ones could not be trusted along the dangerous sheep paths which in those parts are the only roads from one place to another. Yet, notwithstanding this, many of those shepherds' children knew how to read, and not a few were in possession of the Holy Scriptures. I will tell you how this was.

About five miles from the blind girl's home there was a little village, where lived a holy pastor who had the charge of a small church, but who, not contented with caring merely for the welfare of the few souls who lay immediately around him, did all he could for the poor people in the neighbouring mountains. During the winter, when the snow lay knee-deep on the ground, it was not always possible for this good man to pursue his work of charity, but during the summer months, he used to make weekly expeditions

over the hills, visiting each cottage, reading and explaining God's Word to the cottagers, and wherever he could, assembling the children together, and teaching them to read. His efforts had been blessed with success, as what efforts are not, which are commenced from love to Jesus, and carried on with prayer for his blessing, and in dependence on his grace?

One of this good pastor's best scholars had been the blind girl's brother, a lad of fourteen, who had learned to read so quickly that only a few months after he first began the pastor had rewarded his diligence by giving him a Bible. Every evening of his life, when the lad returned from his work, he would take his Bible, and read aloud to his family the precious truths contained in it. The father listened with interest. So did the mother. Some of the younger children listened also. But the one who listened with the greatest delight was the blind girl. Her whole soul seemed to drink in the blessed truths which fell upon her ear. She heard of Jesus, and her heart warmed with love to the Saviour who had so cared for poor sinful creatures, that He had left his happy home to die for their sakes. She listened to the account of his wonderful miracles when upon earth, and was comforted by the thought of his

amazing power. He was not upon earth now, and she could not go to Him, as did blind Bartimeus of old, and ask Him to restore her sight, but soon He would come again in his glory, and then He would give her a new body, with every part made perfect. The little blind girl heard, and believed, and was made happy.

But it was a great privation to her that she could not herself read the precious book which brought such comfort to her soul. Her brother was away from home the whole day, and it often tried her patience to await cheerfully the hour of his return. But this trial God in his mercy saw fit to remove. Some of my little readers may have heard of *colporteurs*, but some do not perhaps know what they are—good men who spend their lives in travelling from one place to another, distributing Bibles, and striving to teach people to love and value the Book of Life.

Well, one day, one of these good *colporteurs* found his way to the blind girl's home, and there he learnod that the one in that family who valued the precious truths of the Bible the most highly was prevented by her blindness from reading it. Now, what do you think this kind *colporteur* did? He was so much interested in this blind girl, that he resolved on procuring for her one of those Bibles which are

made expressly for the blind. These poor people had never heard of them; but there are such Bibles, in which the letters are raised from the page, and can be discerned by the touch. They are very difficult to make, and consequently very expensive to buy, and the *colporteur* could not hope to procure more than a portion of the Bible for her, but he resolved to do what he could.

On his return to the town in which he lived, he raised a subscription amongst some Christian friends there, and soon returned to the mountain, carrying with him the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, printed for the blind, and he determined to remain there until the blind girl should have learned from him the art of reading them.

It was a work of much labour, both to the little girl and her kind teacher; but eagerly did the blind child give her mind to the task, and in a short time she had so mastered the difficulty, that she was able, by passing her fingers over the raised letters, herself to read God's Word. Oh, with what delight did that little girl dwell on each holy verse which told her of the wondrous love of the Saviour, and with what joy her heart was filled, as she read of the bright home that awaited her in heaven, where there would be no

more blindness, or poverty, but all would be joy, and peace, and gladness.

For many months she tasted the delight of being able to commune with her Saviour, through his own Word, and then a heavy trial came. In earlier life she had been so delicate, that she had never been expected to do anything towards the maintenance of her family; but of late she had become quite strong, and her father required her help. It was little the poor blind child could do; but he hoped to make her useful by teaching her to help him in his out-door work; and most willing his little daughter was to render him what service she could; but what was her grief at finding that the occupation in which he employed her rendered her fingers so rough, that it was no longer possible for her to discern by the touch the words of her beloved Bible. Night after night did she lie awake, weeping because another and another day had gone by without her reading one verse for herself in the gospel she loved so well. She longed to ask her father to allow her to work no more; but this she felt would not be right; it would not be following out the precepts of that very book which teaches us to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

At length it struck her that if she could peel the skin from the tips of her fingers, she might, perhaps, be able to feel the letters. She procured a knife, and carefully removed the hard skin from her fingers. It was a painful operation; but the longing she felt after God's Word made her go through it without shrinking, and the joy that she experienced when she found she could again read her beloved Bible, fully rewarded her for all the pain. But her joy was of short duration. The skin grew again, and again she had recourse to her knife, until at length her fingers were in such a state that she saw, if she persevered in this conduct, she would soon be unable either to read her Bible or to help her father in his work. With a sorrowful heart she resolved on striving to submit patiently to God's will, and throwing herself on her knees, she prayed that God would give her strength to bear the trial. Then rising, she sought for the precious book from which she felt herself obliged to part, and, opening its treasured leaves, she pressed them fondly to her lips. What was her joy at finding that she could easily discern with her lips the raised letters which her fingers could no longer trace. With a full heart she poured forth her thankfulness to Him who had only withheld the blessing until He had

brought her will into entire submission to his own. Now all her former happiness was restored.

Every leisure moment was henceforth devoted to reading the Bible, and often during the lonely hours of the night, when all the other members of the household were wrapped in slumber, this little girl might have been seen poring over the pages of the gospels, and tracing with her lips the record of her Saviour's love. Well would it be for all if they had the same love for the Word of God that this blind girl possessed; and earnestly do I hope that this little story may be the means of stirring up some one of my young readers, at least, to love and value the Book of Life more than they have yet done.

THE WEARY LITTLE TRAVELLER.

"HAVE we much further to go?" asked a weary little boy of his father, as together they climbed the narrow winding path of a very steep hill; "is it still far off?" and the boy's voice sounded low and faint, and he seemed to have but little strength left in his tired frame.

"We have a long way before us yet, my boy," his father replied, "and very sorry I am on your account, for I know you are well nigh exhausted, but we must persevere, the evening is closing in, and we have not much time left," and the kind father urged on his boy's failing steps with a helping hand, and words of hopeful encouragement.

"Can we not stop and rest awhile, father?" was the child's next question. "It is very pleasant here. See, father, here is soft purple heath, we might lie down here for the night, and go on our journey again to-morrow.

The air does not feel cold, no harm would come to us."

"You do not know the road, my child," the father replied, "nor the dangers that are in the way. It is impossible to think of resting. It is safe to travel here by day, but at night the beasts of the field wander abroad, and that soft bed of purple heath would not long be a safe resting-place for my little son and his father. No, Ernest dear, we must travel on, nor talk of resting until we reach our home."

The child said no more about stopping to rest upon the journey, but he held his father's hand more tightly, and summoning up all his resolution, went bravely on. But in spite of all his efforts, his feeble steps grew more feeble, his pale face grew yet paler, and when his father marked his increasing weakness, he almost feared lest the boy should indeed sink before they reached their journey's end.

"You must let me carry you, Ernest," he said.

The boy remonstrated, for he knew how weary his father himself was, and how unequal to the task of carrying so heavy a burden up that steep hill.

But the father insisted. He made Ernest sit down beside him on the green grass, and taking from his

wallet the little flask which he had provided to strengthen them on their journey, he made Ernest drink of the refreshing draught, and did so himself. Then, raising his child in his arms, he toiled with him up the hill, which seemed to grow yet steeper as they went onward.

The task was beyond his strength. Love enabled him to persevere for a little while, and then sinking down beneath his burden, the father confessed in a faint voice that he could go on no further.

"I am rested now, dear father," Ernest said, "do rest yourself awhile, and then I will try and go on again. I knew you could not carry me. Oh, father, it is a weary, weary journey." And Ernest's eyes filled with tears. "We were so poor," he said; "if we had not been so poor, we need not have left our happy home to seek for work, and we might have spared money to buy a mule to take us back, only you wanted to carry all you had earned home to my mother and the little ones. Oh, father, shall we ever see them again? What a long, long journey it has been!"

"Very long and very weary, Ernest," his father answered, "but home will seem all the pleasanter when we reach it. Come, let us toil on, my son. Your mother's smile will be a rich welcome. The sight of

her dear face, and the sound of the children's merry voices will reward us for all this toilsome journey. Let us not think of the tedious road, but of the happy end. Come on, my boy, come on," and together they went on, that weary father and son, the father leaning on his strong knotted staff, the constant companion of the Swiss, and the son holding his father's hand, and striving not to drag upon him.

"How shall you know when you get near home, father, the road never seems to change, unless it be that it gets steeper and steeper?" asked Ernest, at length.

"I know the road well," his father replied, "and when we get near our journey's end, it winds round the top of the mountain. We shall then soon see the lights shining in the châlets* of our own little village. That will be a happy sight, will it not, Ernest? It always seems to me as if I were already at home when once I see that light." And the very thought of it seemed to inspire Ernest with fresh strength, and to lend greater power to his weary limbs. He should soon see the light—the blessed light that was shining in his own little home, and then a few steps more would bring him home to his own door, within the sight of his mother's

* Châlet, a Swiss hut.

sweet face, within the sound of her dear voice. Courage, then! he would go bravely forward! The journey was painful, but the end would be happiness!

They reached the summit of the steep hill; they turned into the narrow path that wound along the mountain top; and they had not gone very far along it before Ernest exclaimed, in a voice that had gained sudden strength, "There it is! Father, father! I see the light!"

And surely enough there could be seen in the distance a bright light shining in the clear twilight of the closing evening.

"That is home!" exclaimed his father in reply; "a few steps more, and we are there."

And in what seemed to Ernest but a few moments they entered into the narrow path that led to their own little cottage. Softly as their weary feet trod, their footsteps were heard by loving watchers within, and before they could reach the door it had been opened wide to receive them; and the bright stream of light that issued from it seemed indeed to give them a loving welcome. That stream of light shone upon a lovely picture—the fond wife clasped in her husband's arms; the children clinging to their

father's and brother's knees; the pale, weary Ernest sobbing with very joy upon his sister's neck. The father had said truly, the joy had far exceeded the toil.

The next morning found Ernest and his father refreshed in body and spirit, and filled with thankful joy as they took their accustomed places once more at the old table in the little kitchen.

"We shall buy a cow now, children," said the father, as he emptied the bright gold pieces from his pocket, and handed them over to his wife. "I did not leave home for nothing, you see, Marie, and why not?"

"Because," said his wife, "before you went you asked the God of Jacob to go with you."

"Yes," replied her husband, "the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it. And now, my children, to-day shall be a holiday; to-morrow, Ernest and I must begin to work. To-day we will rest, and enjoy ourselves at home. We have not been together for many a day, and you shall hear about our journey. I could not tell you much last night, for I was too weary; but now I will tell you all, and you shall thank God, who has brought me

safely to its end." And the father told them all, and they listened with eager interest.

"A weary journey it was," he said. "Many a time, as I toiled along, it reminded me of another journey which, like this one which I have passed over, is weary in itself often, but often, too, most happy in its end—a journey we are all, every one of us, the youngest as well as the oldest, all taking."

"What, even little Margot?" exclaimed Thérèse.

"Yes," said the father, "even little Margot, though she has not yet gone very far in it."

And then Ernest, on whose lap the said little Margot, a babe of eighteen months, was then sitting, exclaimed, "You mean the journey of life, father."

"I do, Ernest, and a very important journey it is, often a weary one. God means it to be so, or we should do, as Ernest wanted to do yesterday, sit down and rest, and sleep, and be eaten up by the wild beasts."

"But there are no wild beasts waiting to eat us, are there, father?" asked little Thérèse, anxiously. "We are safe in the village here; the wolves are all outside in the forest, there are none here."

"No, Thérèse, no wild beasts to eat your bodies, thank God; but everywhere, and in all places, is that great enemy of man whom the Bible calls 'a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;' and if, instead of pressing on towards our heavenly home, we sit down amongst the pleasures of this life, or turn out of the narrow way in which our Saviour bids us walk, into the paths of sin, then we may be sure the devil will not fail to seek our souls, and take possession of them."

"Father," said Ernest, "I long to walk always in the narrow path, but it is often very hard, and then my feet seem to give way, and I have no strength to go on."

"Ernest," replied his father, "when you sank down from weakness yesterday, I tried to carry you. You felt no weakness when I was bearing you in my arms."

"No, father, none."

"So must it be in the upward path to heaven; you will fail, your weak feet will give way. Then cry to your Saviour to lift you up, and bear you in his arms. I could not carry you long, for, like you, Ernest, I am but weak myself and mortal; but if once you have the everlasting arms beneath you, then

is there no more need to fear. Only trust to Christ, and He will bear you onwards, over every steep place and through each dark valley, until the glorious light of the eternal city shines full upon your view, and the weary traveller is brought in safety to his heavenly home."

A VISIT OF CONSEQUENCE.

"Oh, mamma! and am I really to go?" exclaimed little Johnnie Graham, while his blue eyes sparkled with most unusual brightness, and the colour rose higher in his cheeks, "you don't mean to say you are going to take me with you? Why, papa said it was such a very grand house, and that the gentleman was a great lord. You know, mamma, I have never seen a lord in all my life. I should like to go very much, only I am afraid I shall not know how to behave in such a fine house, and perhaps, mamma, they won't like your taking a little boy like me—do you think they will?" he asked anxiously, for, in spite of all his fears on the subject, Johnnie felt not a little anxious to accompany his papa and mamma in the visit they were that day to make to the splendid mansion of Lord B——, who had lately come to reside in the neighbourhood.

Great, therefore, was little Johnnie's delight when his mamma answered, "Yes, Johnnie; I know they will like our taking you with us; indeed, one reason why we are going is because Lady B—— wishes so much to see you. Lord B—— told your papa, when he met him at dinner at the Rector's, that they once had a little boy just your age, and his mamma was so fond of him she never liked him to be out of her sight; that little boy died some time ago, but, ever since then, his mamma has always liked to see children of his age and talk to them, and, when Lord B—— heard that we had a little son just six years old, he begged that we would bring him with us to the Castle to-day. So you see, Johnnie, you need not be afraid lest they should not like to see you."

Johnnie felt very glad to hear this, but still his anxiety was not altogether at an end.

"What clothes shall I put on, mamma?" he asked next. "Mary said last Sunday, when she dressed me for church, that my best clothes were getting shabby, and she thought you must soon get me new ones. Do you think they will do to wear to-day?"

"Perfectly well, Johnnie," his mamma replied; "and you had better go and ask Mary to put them on

for you now, for your papa will soon be here to fetch us, and I must get ready too."

Away ran Johnnie to look for Mary and get dressed, while his mamma, smiling at the eager pleasure her little boy took in this expected visit to a grander place than any he had ever before seen, went to her own room to put on her bonnet. Johnnie could scarcely keep quiet while the maid was dressing him. "You don't know what a fine place it is, Mary," he said; "you have never seen such a beautiful house, I know you haven't. It has been shut up for such a long time, but now it's all made to look so beautiful. Papa has been there, and he says all this little cottage where we live would go into the great dining-hall there is in that fine castle. And the furniture is so beautiful, and there are such grand pictures—a whole room full of nothing but pictures. I wish my clothes were not so shabby; mamma says they will do very well, but I don't think they look very nice to go to such a fine house as that." And Johnnie gave rather an uneasy look at the neat little merino pelisse which he had thought quite smart enough for every previous occasion on which it had been worn, but which seemed now to have grown suddenly very shabby.

Johnnie had heard his papa describing the fine

things he had seen at Castle B——, and, moreover, he had himself seen Lord and Lady B—— driving through the quiet little village in a grand carriage, with two such fine horses, and three such fine men-servants in gay dresses as had never been seen in that village before within the memory of little Johnnie.

"You must behave very well, Master Johnnie," said Mary, as she finished dressing him, and saw him run off to join his papa and mamma at the gate.

"Yes, of course I must behave very well," thought Johnnie, as he walked by his mamma's side up to the castle, "I must behave better than I ever have done anywhere else. I daresay that lady's little boy never did anything rude in his life, and she will expect to see me like him perhaps." He looked so thoughtful that his mamma asked him what he was thinking about, and he told her; his mamma smiled, but she did not say anything then.

Johnnie's little heart beat fast when they reached the castle, and his papa rang a great bell which pealed through the hall. It beat faster still when the great bell was answered by a tall footman in very smart clothes, who led them along the hall, and up a great wide staircase, so wide and large that Johnnie felt

quite lost in it, and was very glad when his mamma took hold of his little hand. And then the drawing-room where Lady B—— sat, with all the beautiful furniture, and the lovely pictures, and exquisite flowers.

It was indeed a grand place, and little Johnnie felt not a little surprised to see that Lady B—— did not seem very different from his mamma; she was not much more grand, he thought, and she did not seem at all proud, but talked to him very kindly, and brought him some pretty toys and books which had once belonged to her own little boy, and which she said she always kept in a closet in her room, and liked to see little children happy with, it reminded her of her own darling child, and the pleasant hours he had often spent in that room playing with those very toys. It was many years ago now, she said, but that happy time was still very fresh in her memory, for mothers love their little children so well that they never forget anything that happens to them.

Altogether Johnnie spent a very happy day at the castle, and he was not at all sorry to hear Lady B—— ask his mamma, when they were taking leave, to let him come again, or to hear his mamma say that she would be very happy to allow him to do so.

That night, when Johnnie was undressing to go to his little bed in his mamma's room, his mind was still so occupied with his visit to the castle, and all the grand things he had seen there, that he could not talk of anything else; and when he knelt as usual at his mother's knee to repeat his evening prayer, and then stood by her side to say his evening hymn, he could not fix his thoughts upon the words his lips were uttering, and as soon as ever he had pronounced the last word he began quickly to talk again about all he had seen.

"It was a great honour to go there, wasn't it, mamma?" he asked. "I don't think Willie Stanley has ever been inside the gate. I wonder if Lady B—— will ever ask him; do you think she will?"

"I don't know, Johnnie," replied his mother. And she said these words so gravely that Johnnie looked up at her and asked quickly, "What's the matter, mamma? are you vexed with me? I thought you said I had behaved very well. I'm sure I tried to, for I thought it a great honour to go there."

"Yes, Johnnie dear," his mother replied, "you behaved very well, and I am not vexed about anything; only I was thinking that my little boy often goes with me to pay a visit of much greater conse-

quence even than the visit we have been paying to-day, and yet he has never seemed to think much about it, or to consider it a very great honour."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Johnnie, in great surprise; "what *do* you mean? I never go to any place half so grand as Castle B——. We don't know any people who are so great as Lord B——?"

"No, Johnnie," his mamma replied, "we don't know anybody on earth so great; but have you never heard of any one who is greater than the very greatest of all the lords and princes that ever lived on earth; of some one who is called the Lord of lords and King of kings?"

"You mean Jesus, mamma," said Johnnie. "Yes, of course I know about Him; only you know we don't go to see Jesus. He is not on earth now, mamma; we can't go to visit Him."

"Not when we pray, Johnnie?" said his mother. "What is prayer, if it is not going, as it were, to visit Jesus? If my little boy will listen to me I will tell him what that good man, David, thought about prayer. Listen to what he says, Johnnie: 'Serve the Lord with gladness: come *before his presence* with singing.' And again, '*Enter into* his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.' My little boy thinks

it a great honour to have paid a visit to an earthly lord; he was quite delighted to enter his gates, and pass through his courts; and yet, Johnnie, do you think much of coming into our Heavenly Lord's presence? I fear not, or you would be more anxious to come before Him in a right spirit."

Johnnie hung down his head, for he remembered well how he had just been hurrying through his prayers, and his mother's words went to his heart.

"You recollect, Johnnie," she said, "how anxious you were to be properly clothed this morning. Why were you so concerned about it?"

"Because, mamma, I was afraid they might be displeased if I was not properly dressed."

"Well now, Johnnie, dear, I will tell you how Jesus likes to see those dressed who come into His presence. They must come before Him with reverence and humility, bearing in mind that He is greater by far than the very highest of all earth's kings, that He is so great that at the sight of his glory the very angels veil their faces. Oh, Johnnie, if you could see what a glorious place heaven is, you would not think any more about the grandeur even of the beautiful castle you saw to-day. There the streets are paved with gold, and the gates all made of precious stones;

there the angels sing praises day and night upon their golden harps to the glory of that great God into whose presence my little boy was not afraid to come this evening with an unprepared heart, and lips that spoke only words without any meaning."

"Oh, mamma," exclaimed Johnnie, "I'm very sorry. I never thought about it before; but I do see it now, and I will try always to remember how very great God is. You have told me so very often, I know, but I never understood it before; but now I think I do, and when I think about my visit to the castle, I will try to remember what you have told me about the visit which is greater still, and to go to it in a right spirit."

And so Johnnie did, and from that day he never again knelt in prayer to God without remembering what a solemn thing it is to enter into the presence of the Most High.

TRUE COURAGE; OR, WHAT'S A MUFF?

"WHAT a coward that fellow Walter is to be sure!" said Philip Bromley to his brother Ernest, in a very contemptuous tone of voice. "I never did see such a coward, did you?"

"I don't know," answered Ernest, doubtfully.

"Don't know!" returned Philip; "what a goose you are, Ernest! why it's easy enough to see when a fellow is a coward or not. I threw that ball at him when we were playing cricket on purpose to provoke him, and try to put him into a rage, just for the fun of seeing how he would look in a passion, and I declare he didn't seem to mind it one bit, though he must have known I did it on purpose. It's easy enough to see he hasn't got one bit of spirit. Father said he was a fine fellow, and he wished we would take pattern by him. For my part I can't say I see where his fineness lies. I think him a *muff*. That's my opinion of him, and if

he wants to know it, he's welcome to hear it." And seeing his cousin Walter at that moment close to him, Philip raised his voice louder, and repeated the words, "I think him a regular *muff*."

That Walter Greaves heard his cousin's words was quite evident, and also that he applied them, as it was intended he should do, to himself, for his fair face coloured scarlet, and something like a very angry flash shone in his blue eyes, but he said not a word, and coming straight up to his cousin, gave him a ball which he had gone to fetch from the house.

Ernest began to think that Philip was right, and that Walter must be a coward, for certainly if any boy of his own age and size had called *him* a muff, he should most unquestionably have thought it his bounden duty to knock him down on the spot, or to forfeit for ever all claim to being considered a boy of pluck and spirit. But Ernest's opinions about Walter were all upset again before the next quarter of an hour had passed. The boys were just preparing for a fresh game at cricket, when a little girl was seen running towards them as fast as a pair of very small legs could carry her.

"It's little Jenny Blake, the lodge-keeper's child," said Walter. "I wonder what she wants."

"Oh, let her alone," said Philip; "come along and play."

"Stop a minute," said Walter, "the child wants something, or she would not run like that."

And sure enough little Jenny did want something, for she came racing on as fast as she could until she reached the boys, when she exclaimed in a very panting voice, "Oh, Master Walter, please come!"

"What for, Jenny?" asked Walter, kindly.

"For Stephen," replied the child; "he's got up the tree somehow, and mother says he'll be killed, and father isn't home. Please come, Master Walter."

And Walter went, though Philip called to him not to be such a goose, but to stop and have their game, and let the lodge-keeper's child get down the tree the same way he had got up. But Walter was determined to go, and since he would go, Philip and Ernest thought they might as well follow, for they could not play without Walter, and they might have some fun.

So the three boys accompanied little Jenny to the lodge, or rather they went on in front, and she came running after as best she could. They soon reached the lodge, and there was little Stephen Blake up a tall tree. How he got there no one knew, and how he was ever to get down, no one could tell either.

Philip proposed a ladder, but Mrs. Blake did not think there was a ladder to be got except by going up to the house, which was such a way off, and she was afraid Stephen would never stop quiet where he was till they came back; and if he moved amongst those thin branches, the chances were he would come tumbling down to the ground, and break his leg, or be killed."

"How did he get up?" asked Philip. And little Jenny said he had climbed up from branch to branch, as he'd seen Master Walter do, until he got up so high he was frightened, and when he tried to get down he couldn't, and so began to cry for mother.

"Well," said Walter, "since it was trying to follow my example that first got him into the pickle, the least I can do is to try and get him out of it. Stop there, Stephen, don't move, and I'll come up for you."

"You can't do it," said Ernest, "the branches won't bear your weight. That little fellow would get along well enough, but you'd break them down."

"I must try," said Walter; "I'll choose the best branches. I know the tree well enough, and though I wouldn't climb just where he is if I could help it, there's nothing else to be done that I see. If we had a ladder it would be no use. Some one must get the

"The least I can do is to try and get him out of it."

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child down, he's shaking with fright now, so I'm off."

And in a minute Walter had mounted to the tree. He tried the branches where Stephen was, but they would not bear his weight; and as he shook them by trying them, the child became so terrified that every moment they dreaded lest he should lose his hold, and fall headlong to the ground.

"Now for it," said Walter to himself, and with one leap he sprang from the bough on which he stood right across to another opposite, and clinging with one hand to a pretty firm branch, he caught hold of little Stephen with the other, and helped him to descend to the bough on which he himself stood. Then came the difficulty. Stephen must cross the light boughs, which would not bear Walter's weight, but this the little fellow was persuaded to do by Walter's holding him at arm's length as he climbed the branches, until he had safely reached the strong bough, when Walter again leaped across to it, and then easily helped the child to descend the rest of the tree, and, to his mother's inexpressible relief, landed him safely on the ground, when he very readily promised that he would not again make experiments in climbing; he never meant to go up so high, he did

not know he was climbing so far, and he wanted to look into the magpie's nest.

The boys returned to their football, Philip saying, as they went along, that Walter had had a "very plucky climb." Could he be such a muff after all? And yet that very evening Philip pronounced him to be a greater muff than ever. They had given up play, and were returning home to the house, when they met a party of boys in full chase after a large dog, who was running madly along with something tied to its tail.

"Here's fun," said Philip; "let's have a race." And he and Ernest would both have joined in the chase, if Walter had not hung back.

"You're afraid of the farmer who owns the dog," said Philip, laughing.

"No, I'm not," said Walter; "at least, I'm not afraid of him; but I shouldn't like to make him angry. But that's not my reason for not going after that poor dog."

"Well, what is it, then?" said Philip; "you think your mamma would not like it, I suppose?"

Walter coloured, and then he answered, "No, I know my mother would not like it, and certainly that's one reason why I ought not to do it; but besides that,

I shouldn't like it myself; it's very cruel to the poor dog, and there's no real fun in it, and it's going with all sorts of boys that my mother never likes my going with."

"My goodness!" said Philip, "how good, and wise, and gentlemanlike we are! Why don't you say outright that you'd be afraid of getting into a row, and so have done with it."

"Because," said Walter, "that isn't my reason, only it's no use my telling you what it is, since you won't believe me."

"I think you're a very queer fellow," replied Philip; "and that's just the truth. I can't make you out; you seem brave enough at some things, and yet you're a terrible *muff* at others. There, since you like plain-speaking, there it is for you. That's just what Ernest and I think about you, and have thought ever since this morning, when we arrived here."

"What's your idea of a *muff*, then?" asked Walter.

"A muff!" said Philip. "Why, it's a fellow that hasn't any spirit; that lets other fellows insult him; that doesn't like fighting—you don't like fighting I know by the way you stood my teazing about the

cricket, and didn't show fight when I threw the ball over at you. You ain't the boy to fight at a moment's notice."

"No," said Walter, "I used to be more ready to fight, but now I do try to keep out of it." Strange to say, scarcely had Walter uttered these words when the two brothers were surprised to see him spring over a hedge, behind which they could hear the sound of boys' voices, apparently in dispute; one seemed, from the noise, to be crying, and the other was raised in loud abuse. But before Philip and Ernest had also sprung over the hedge to see what was going on, the voices had changed; and when they reached the spot, they found Walter Greaves employed in giving, what Philip termed, a very "sound drubbing" to a boy a little bigger than himself, while another boy, considerably younger, stood looking on, with the marks of tears upon his face and pinafore.

"There!" said Walter, "I hope that will teach you to mend your manners, you great bully. You're the greatest coward I know, to be for ever ill-treating that poor little brother of yours. You wouldn't dare to do it if your father was alive to take his part."

"No, that he wouldn't," exclaimed the mother

of both the boys, as she came out and joined the party. "He's a bad boy, though I, his own mother, have to say it, and he gives that poor child no peace."

"Well, he's got it himself for once," said Walter; "and I'll give him as many more as he likes if ever I catch him at the same work again. So good evening, Mrs. Jones."

"Good evening, sir, and thank you."

Philip laughed at the woman's civility in thanking the young gentleman for thrashing her son.

"But I thought, Walter," he said, "you didn't like fighting. Upon my word, preaching is one thing, and practising what we preach, is another thing altogether."

Walter laughed too. "I don't like fighting, Philip, if you mean fighting for fighting's sake, just to show one isn't afraid, or because one won't hear a word one doesn't like. But standing up for those that can't stand up for themselves, is quite a different thing, and I hope to be able to do that whenever the opportunity occurs. That boy is a wretched bully. He's the plague of his mother's life, and half kills that little unfortunate half-brother of his because he fancies the mother cares more for him than she does

for himself; and no wonder if she does, considering what sort of a boy he is. He has wanted a thrashing this long time, and now he has had one, I hope it may do him good."

Philip and Ernest were both beginning to think that Walter was no *muff* at all.

That night this opinion was so completely confirmed that it remained unshaken ever afterwards. The three boys were to sleep in one room, and Philip having undressed, got into bed. The thought of his prayers crossed his mind, for his mother had been very careful in making him say them every night, but he always left the habit at home. He never took it to school with him; it was not the fashion to say one's prayers there, and Philip could never have introduced it, lest he should have brought upon himself by so doing the much-dreaded name of *muff*. And not knowing what Walter's opinions on the subject might be, he went prayerless to bed. Ernest followed his brother's example. Walter stood for a moment as if in hesitation, and then kneeling down by his bedside, he hid his face in his hands to say his evening prayers.

When he, too, was in bed, Philip said, "If you did that at school, the boys would call you a *muff*."

"Would they?" said Walter. "I'm going to school next year, to the same school where you go. I shall hate to be called a muff, but I hope I shall have courage given me to bear even that, rather than leave off the only thing that ever can keep me straight."

And after that neither Philip nor Ernest Bromley ever talked of Walter Greaves being *a muff*.

DISCONTENT; OR, HIGH AND LOW.

"THESE horrid steps! how I hate them!" exclaimed a little girl in a very impatient voice, as kneeling on the stone steps of her mother's house, she was going through her morning work of whitening them. "I wish there was no such thing as working in the world," she thought. "I wonder why it should be that some people have got so much of it while other people have none! It does not seem to me at all fair! Here am I obliged to get up every morning at six o'clock, and sometimes even earlier when mother is ill or busy, and to work hard from morning till night at one thing or another—sweeping out the shop, cleaning the windows, running on errands, minding the baby, and a hundred other things besides, all which I hate; and there's Miss Clinton that lives opposite, and that is just my own age, for I heard Mrs. Clinton tell mother so one day when she came into the shop to order some rolls

—she has not got a thing to do from morning to night but amuse herself. She doesn't even dress herself! I know she doesn't for I can see into her room from our attic, and I've often seen her standing near the window, and a maid-servant putting on her things just as if she was a doll, while I've got, not only to dress myself, I like that well enough, and I don't think I should much fancy standing quiet, and letting some one else dress me just as if I hadn't got any arms or hands of my own; no, I like dressing myself well enough, but to have to dress Johnny and Patty besides, and even the baby sometimes, I think it's too bad. And then to see Miss Clinton, and the life she leads! When she is dressed, I don't believe she does a thing the whole living day until she goes to bed, and gets undressed again. I see her walking in her fine garden with a book in her hand sometimes, but the moment she gets a bit tired down goes her book, and she sits down to rest. I am sure she lay on the grass under the chestnut tree in their garden for a good hour yesterday. I believe she was asleep, for I watched her all the time I was knitting at those horrid little socks for Johnny. I'm sure I was fifty times more tired than she was, and yet I wonder what mother would have said, if I had laid down my work and

gone to sleep! How she would have scolded! She says I must get those socks done this evening, and however I'm to do it I don't know, for I've got to wash all the morning, and after dinner father said I must carry a note for him right up to his master's house, and when I get back I shall have to clear away the tea things, for mother says that's part of my regular work; and she never will let me off anything. I think she must be the most particular mother in all the world."

Thus thought the ungrateful, and discontented little Susan Meadows, as with a slow hand, which, to a stranger would have betokened anything but the vast amount of work she had to get through, she scrubbed the steps of her father's doorway, and meditated upon her own heavy troubles, and her mother's extreme severity.

And yet her mother's voice did not sound so *very* harsh or cross; on the contrary, it was a very quiet, calm voice that soon afterwards called to Susan from the open door of a room just inside, asking if she were not ready to get the breakfast.

"I'm coming, mother," replied Susan, and she hastened her hand a little. "I shall get scolded for these steps, I know. Ten to one if mother doesn't

make me do them all over again as soon as ever I've had my breakfast. Oh dear! oh dear! how I wish I had been born a lady!" And Susan cast a longing look at the closed shutter of Miss Clinton's bedroom window, which, though it was past seven o'clock, had not yet been opened, and thought of the happy little girl just her own age who was doubtless sleeping comfortably in her soft bed. "Oh dear," Susan thought, "what a difference there is between being the daughter of a rich London merchant, and being the daughter of a poor London baker!"

As Susan had expected, Mrs. Meadows was by no means satisfied with the careless, slovenly manner in which her doorsteps had been cleaned that morning, and accordingly no sooner was her usual morning's business finished of washing up the breakfast things, and taking her little brother and sister to school, than Susan was sent to whiten the steps a little better than she had chosen to do before breakfast.

If she had been sulky then, Susan was a great deal more sulky now; indeed, she thought herself altogether such a very unfortunate, miserable, and badly-used girl, that she could not keep from crying, and more than one salt tear fell upon the stones which she was whitening. The salt tears, however, fell too far off for

little Louisa Clinton to be able to perceive anything of them, as she stood gazing out of her bedroom window, or she would not perhaps have turned round to the maid who was sitting working in the room, and said in an angry, petulant voice,

"I declare, Simmons, I should like to be that little girl down there."

"Miss Louisa!" exclaimed Simmons, in a reproving tone.

"Yes," replied Louisa, impatiently, "you may say 'Miss Louisa,' like that, Simmons, but I *do* wish it. I wish it with all my heart. I'd a great deal rather be that little girl than be myself; I'm sure she isn't half as bothered and troubled as I am."

"Do you know who that child is, miss?" asked Simmons. "She's the eldest girl of Meadows, the baker, and there are five children younger than she is, and that girl has got to work hard enough, I know, to help her mother with the children and about the house. I see her going about from one thing to the other, and I don't believe she gets an hour's rest in the course of the whole day."

"I don't care about that," replied Louisa. "The work she has to do is easy sort of work; I see her going about just as well as you do, Simmons, and I

shouldn't a bit mind running about all day doing the things she does, they are all just like play. She goes to fetch milk; I see her going down the street with an empty can and coming back with it full; I think that must be great fun. I often wish mamma would let me go to shops by myself, but she won't. I never saw any one so particular as she is about me."

"Of course, Miss Louisa," said Simmons, "your mamma's particular about you because you are a young lady."

"Well, then, I wish I wasn't a young lady," exclaimed Louisa. "I tell you, I call all that little girl does very nice play, and nothing else—fetching milk and taking that pretty little brother and sister to school, and nursing that dear little baby they've got. I saw her yesterday minding it for nearly an hour, and I wished I had it. You know I'm so fond of babies, and I never see one except when we go to spend the day with Mary, and then the nurse will scarcely ever let me touch the baby; she comes running after me if I take it in my arms, just as if she thought I was going to kill it, and declares I'm much too young to handle a baby properly, though I am its aunt. I wish she could see that little girl minding theirs. And after she had kept it in her arms till I think it must have

been asleep, she put it into a cradle, and I could see her sitting in a little chair by the side of the cradle, knitting, I think she was, and rocking the baby at the same time. And all the time I was so miserable."

"Because your mamma went to Richmond without you," said Simmons.

"Yes," said Louisa. "I should not have cared if I had had anything to do, but I hadn't. It was so dull stopping here all by myself. I got so tired of reading, I let my book fall at last, and I believe I lay down under the tree and went to sleep."

"You might have been learning your lessons for Miss Grainger, miss," suggested Simmons.

"Oh! those horrid lessons! I don't know them now; and Miss Grainger is so horribly cross when I can't say my lessons, and she tells mamma, and then mamma won't take me out in the carriage, and it's so dull at home. Oh, what a life it is! I'm sure the baker's daughter is a happy girl to know nothing about French, and music, and drawing, and all the troublesome things I have to attend to, and to be able to go where she likes without being continually told that she mustn't go here, and she mustn't go there, because she's a young lady! I'm sure I wish I was a baker's daughter, or anything rather than what I am!" And

hearing her governess's voice calling her, Louisa Clinton went sulkily downstairs, while Simmons went on with her work, thinking, as she did so, that if ever there was an ill-tempered, ungrateful girl in the world, it was Miss Louisa Clinton, the only child, with the exception of a married daughter, of rich parents, who had really every blessing which heart could desire or earth could afford, and yet who was never satisfied, and never happy, because she possessed that curse which makes every blessing of no avail—a discontented disposition.

That evening Simmons went across the little garden to Meadow's, the baker, who lived in a small street exactly at the back of Mr. Clinton's fine large house. Simmons went to buy some rolls, and it was little Susan who served her, and who was looking so neat and tidy that Simmons, remembering the conversation she had had with her young mistress that morning about her, was tempted to say that she was sure Susan was a good girl, and a happy girl.

"Do you know," she added, "my young lady says she would like to be in your place instead of her own?"

Susan expressed her astonishment at this so strongly that Simmons explained why it was that Miss

Clinton thought Susan Meadows a happier girl than she was herself. And then Susan, who with all her faults was honest and truthful, confessed to Simmons how earnestly she had longed to be like Miss Clinton, and how full of trouble she found the life which appeared to others so pleasant, and how enviable seemed to her the life which Miss Clinton found so irksome.

"Depend upon it, Susan," remarked Simmons, in reply, "it is not the life we live, but it's the temper we have that makes us either happy or miserable. If you were in Miss Louisa's place, you would be just like her; and if Miss Louisa were in your place, she would be just like you. You are neither of you contented, and so instead of finding out the pleasures of your lot you only think of its troubles, and so long as you do this, you will neither of you be happy; no, nor you would not be if you could change places with the Queen upon her throne. Take my word for it, Susan, and I've seen a good deal more of life than you have, there's trouble everywhere, and pleasure too. And the way to get on is to take them both together, to get through the trouble cheerfully and to enjoy the pleasure thankfully. You try this way now, and tell me if you don't find it answer. I wish I could make my

young mistress do so too; but she's been sadly indulged since Miss Mary married, and she was left the only one at home, and I'm afraid she'll never learn to be contented."

I am afraid she never did, for I have heard that Louisa Clinton grew up a discontented, complaining girl, and was a trouble all her life to herself and everybody else; but Susan Meadows, when she found out that the rich Miss Clinton was no happier, and even less happy than the baker's little daughter, learnt a lesson which she never forgot. She learnt that it is not money, or position, or circumstances that make people happy; but it is temper and spirit. A contented spirit finds happiness for itself everywhere, while there are never wanting sources of trouble and complaining for a discontented mind to feed upon, or rather to poison itself with.

From that day Susan Meadows, to her mother's great joy and to her own great happiness, turned over what is called "a new leaf," that is to say, she set herself in earnest to fulfil the duties of her station, bearing its troubles bravely and enjoying with gratitude its pleasures, and though the door-steps were whiter, the shop cleaner, the baby better minded, and the socks better knitted than ever they had been

oefore, I don't think Susan Meadows was ever heard to complain that she could not find time for all she had to do, or that the duties of her life were too hard for her.

MANNERS MAKE THE MAN.

"I WONDER what sort of weather it is," was Arthur Bevan's first thought, as he awoke from sleep one January morning, and jumped out of bed more quickly than it was usually his custom to do on a cold winter's morning. "I hope to goodness it isn't snowing again."

But it *was* snowing again, and pretty heavily too, and Arthur could see at a glance, as he looked out of his bed-room window, that the snow lay considerably deeper than it had done on the previous day. He dressed himself as quickly as possible. Dressing was never a very long business with Arthur, and washing was a still shorter one. He did not like the cold, and was anxious to get to the school-room fire as soon as he could, and as for his mamma's injunctions to him to be sure to wash and dress himself carefully, I am afraid they never came into Arthur's mind, except

just at the moment that they were being uttered. He did not wait to say his prayers, but as soon as ever he had pulled on his jacket, and given his hair a very hasty brush, he went down to the school-room, where he found the maid preparing the breakfast, and asked her what she thought about the chance of the coach coming in that day.

"I should think it was as likely to come as not," said Jane; "I've known it come in through worse weather than this. Do you want your cousin to come, Master Arthur?" she asked.

"What a ridiculous question to ask," exclaimed Arthur, in a tone of great disgust, "of course I want him to come. Don't you suppose it's dull enough for me here at home to make me feel precious glad that I'm going to have some one to play with at last. What a goose you are, Jane."

Jane did not seem at all offended at being called a goose. She was pretty well accustomed to such compliments from Master Arthur, and she answered very quietly, "I dare say I *am* a goose, but really I didn't know whether you wished your cousin to come, or whether you wouldn't as soon he should stay away. You don't seem to care much about playing with Miss Edith."

"No, I hate it," replied Arthur. "But George Summers is a boy, and there will be some fun playing with him; I hate girls." And so saying, Arthur began poking the fire furiously, in spite of Jane's entreaties to him to let it alone, for it was not half lighted, and he would only poke it out; while Jane left the room, saying to herself as she did so, "And before the week is over, I dare say he'll hate boys too. I never yet saw the thing that Master Arthur didn't hate before he had had it a couple of days."

Arthur went on poking the school-room fire, and had just succeeded, as Jane had prophesied he would do, in completely putting it out, when she returned, and he desired her to relight it, but this she declared she had not the smallest intention of doing, and they were still quarrelling about it when a little girl came into the room, and remarked in a very gentle little voice that it was very cold.

"I should think it just was cold," said Arthur, roughly, "and here's Jane has lighted our fire so badly that it has gone out, and now she won't light it again. I only wish mamma was at home, and then she would soon have to do it. But I tell you what, Edith, you just run downstairs and get some fagots, and you can light it just as well as she can, and I'll

tell mamma about her as soon as ever she comes home."

Edith was preparing to obey, when Jane prevented her, saying, "No, indeed, Miss Edith isn't going to light fires to please you, Master Arthur, and any other young gentleman would be ashamed of himself to behave as you do. *I'll* light the fire for Miss Edith's sake, for if she were not here, you might sit in the cold all day for all I cared."

And Jane went off to the kitchen to get some fagots, and to tell the cook that she did not think there was another such rude disagreeable boy as Master Arthur in all the world. "Mistress has spoiled him, and given him his own way until I declare there's no bearing with him, and if it were not for Miss Edith I would not stop here another week to have to put up with his airs."

"Poor Miss Edith!" replied the other servant, "it isn't much of *her* own way she gets. Master Arthur takes very good care of that. I'm sure the poor child will rejoice when the holidays are over, and it's time for him to go back to school. I know I shall."

"And so shall I," said Jane, "more than you will by a great deal, for I've more to do with him, worse

luck for me. But I must go and light their fire, for Miss Edith looks half frozen, and shivering with the cold."

The fire was relighted, and this time blazed up brightly, but poor Edith was not very much the better for it, for Arthur took possession of the whole fireplace, and remained there until Jane called both the children to breakfast, when as usual he took the best of everything for himself.

"George Summers is coming to-day," he remarked, "I hope this horrid snow won't keep back the coach."

"I hope not," said Edith, "it will be so very nice having him."

"Nice for *me*," replied Arthur; "it won't be anything to you, Edith, I can tell you he won't like you to come bothering us when we are playing."

"I won't bother you," said Edith, gently, "I'm sure, Arthur, I never *do*."

"Oh yes, you do," replied Arthur, rudely, "girls always do, and I know George won't like you to be always getting in our way. All boys hate girls."

It seemed very hard to Edith that this should be the case, but she supposed it must be true since Arthur said so. It certainly seemed so with him, for he rarely

gave her a kind word, and Edith, not knowing any better specimens of boys, was inclined to believe that they were all like her own brother. She gave up, therefore, the idea of receiving any pleasure from her cousin George's expected visit, and taking her book, she sat down quietly to read in a corner of the room, leaving Arthur to loll over the fire until the clock struck eleven, when he jumped up, and said, "Now, Edith, it's time for the coach to be coming over Bolton Hill. You run upstairs in the attic, and keep a look-out. You can see it come along the Bolton road from there, and as soon as ever you catch sight of it, call me, and I'll run down to the coach office, and meet George. I daresay it will be famously late, if it comes at all this weather, but you just keep on the watch."

Edith prepared to go, not because she loved her brother, and liked to oblige him, for she did not,—it would have been strange indeed if she had—but because she was afraid of him. She was taking her book with her, when Arthur caught sight of it, and snatching it out of her hand, he said, "What's the use of your going to look out for the coach, and taking a book with you. You'll be reading it all the time, and the coach will go by without your seeing it."

Edith resigned her book into her brother's hands, and went upstairs, where she stood, shivering with cold, at the attic window, watching for the coach, while Arthur, thinking his sister's book looked interesting, returned to his seat by the fire, and with his feet on the fender, went on reading the story until he heard his sister calling to him that the coach had just come in sight, when he threw down the book, and went off to meet his cousin.

It was not very long before he returned, and with him came George Summers, the cousin whom neither Arthur nor Edith had ever seen before, and who had come to spend a week with them, while their parents were staying with his in London, upon some family business of importance. Edith looked at her cousin, and was somewhat relieved at seeing that he was not a bit like Arthur, in appearance at all events: he had a fair, rosy face, bright blue eyes, and such a merry smile, and when he held out his hand, and said, "And this is Edith, of course. How do you do, Edith? I'm so glad to see you,"—she thought she had never heard anything so pleasant as George's voice in all her life before.

Dinner-time soon came, and it was a very much pleasanter meal than usual. George was at home with

his cousins at once, and told them a great many funny stories about things he had seen in London, and they all got on very well together, though Edith remarked that George looked not a little surprised, and by no means pleased when Arthur, having given George a second help of pudding, took the remainder himself, without even asking his sister whether she wished for any.

"But you haven't asked Edith," he said.

"Oh, Edith doesn't want any," Arthur replied quickly, "do you, Edith?" And Edith of course said, "No."

But George thought that she might have been asked before.

After dinner, as the snow was falling still, Arthur proposed that they should go into his papa's workshop; he was a very fair carpenter for his age, and he wanted to show George how well he could work, and what nice tools his papa had given him. George readily consented. He knew a little about carpentering too, and it would be great fun.

"Won't you come?" he said to Edith, who was hanging back.

And Edith looked at Arthur, who said, "What would she do with us? Girls can't carpenter."

"No," said George, "but perhaps she would like

to look at us, and stop with us. It wouldn't be so dull as staying here alone, I should think. Wouldn't you like to come, Edith?"

Edith said she would.

"Then come along," said George. And she went.

Oh, what a pleasant afternoon that was! Arthur ordered Edith about at first, and made her fetch and carry everything he wanted, but George spoke so civilly to her, just as if she were a grown-up lady, Edith thought, and explained everything to her so kindly and patiently, that before tea-time came, Edith had learned to look upon him as the nicest companion she had ever had—quite a different sort of being from her own brother.

Two or three days passed, and Edith's opinion of George was fully confirmed. He never would go anywhere without her, except it was in bad weather, or to some amusement which though suited for boys, was not fit for girls. If they went to skate, he made Edith come too, saying she could walk up and down by the side of the pond, and watch the fun. If they played battledore and shuttlecock, he insisted on Edith's always having her turn. If they swam their boats on the pond, he made her go with them, and got her to make sails

and flags for him, and dress little sailor dolls for his boats, until Edith, instead of being dull, grew so happy and merry, that long before the week was over, Jane had remarked many times to her fellow-servants that, "Miss Edith was not the same young lady since that nice little cousin came down to stay with them. She only wished he would teach Master Arthur to be a little more like himself." And so he actually did.

Arthur was struck by George's politeness to his sister, and really grew quite ashamed of being rude to Edith in George's presence.

"I tell you what, Arthur," George said to him one day, "you're not half a man."

Arthur fired up at once, for he gloried in being thought manly.

"Well, you're *not* then," persisted George, "for if you were, you would be a great deal kinder to that nice little sister of yours than you are. My father says, that to take advantage of the weakness of others is the sign of a coward, and that the more brave and manly a boy is, the more kind and polite he is sure to be to women and girls, and even to boys who are weaker and younger than himself."

Arthur was beginning to think this must be true, for in all his life he had never seen so spirited or manly

a fellow as George Summers. From that time, he altered his conduct to his gentle little sister, and from that time, they became what God means all brothers and sisters should be to each other, loving and happy little companions.

PEGGY WATSON; OR, "I KILLED MY MOTHER."

"THERE!" exclaimed a young girl in a tone of great impatience, as she flung a pair of socks down upon the table, "there! I can't mend them better than that, and I think it's a shame to have kept me in mending stockings such a day as this, when I wanted so much to go to Croydon."

"I did not keep you, Anna," replied her mother, a sickly-looking woman, who was lying on a sofa in the room.

"It was your fault that I had to stop," retorted the girl, in an unfeeling, disrespectful voice. "You told my father you were too poorly now to mend the things, and that we couldn't afford to have a woman to do it as we used, and of course he said *I* was to do the work, and ordered me not to stir out of doors

to-day till I had finished all the mending in your basket. I believe he guessed I was going to Croydon, and wanted to keep me at home."

"Perhaps he did, Anna," said Mrs. Churchill, meekly. "I wish you would give up going to Croydon. You know I can't bear your being intimate with those Smiths, and I am sure no good will ever come of it."

Why Mrs. Churchill did not desire her daughter Anna *not* to go to Croydon, is a question which most sensible people would at once feel inclined to ask, and though the answer is painful, it is not very difficult. Mrs. Churchill had so over-indulged her only daughter from her infancy until now, that she had ceased to possess the slightest authority over her. Naturally of a selfish and not very affectionate disposition, the system of unceasing indulgence which her parents had pursued in bringing up their child had so fostered the faults of her character, that at fifteen years old, Anna Churchill had grown to be so utterly selfish and self-willed that she consulted nobody's wishes or feelings but her own, would not submit to the slightest control or contradiction from her mother, and when forced to yield to her father's authority on some such occasion as the present, only yielded because she was

obliged to do so, and never failed to vent her ill humour on her mother as soon as ever her father had left the house. So that when her mother raised objections to her daughter's going to Croydon, the only answer which Anna condescended to make was an impatient, "Nonsense."

And then, putting on her cloak and bonnet, she set off to spend the evening with her friends, the Smiths, leaving her mother to the society of her own sad thoughts; and very melancholy companions I am afraid she found them that dreary winter's evening, as she lay back upon her sofa, feeling too ill and too low-spirited even to make for herself the cup of tea which she had been wishing for all the afternoon. She had thought of asking Anna to make it for her before she went to Croydon; but Anna was so cross at having been set down to work by her father, and was so anxious to get finished, and go out, that her mother had not liked to give her anything else to do.

That poor mother! She was reaping now the fruits of her own foolish and sinful over-indulgence, and very bitter fruits they were! She thought so herself now, as she lay in that dull room, all alone, neglected and deserted in her sickness and her sorrow by the child whom she had petted so fondly from her

infancy, and for whose sake she had never thought any sacrifice too great to be made.

Meanwhile, Anna Churchill was sitting in Farmer Smith's comfortable kitchen, enjoying a good supper, a treat which it is true she did not enjoy very often at home now. The fresh home-made bread, the sweet butter, and the well-brewed ale, were very acceptable to Anna; and if she remembered that in the cupboard at home there was only the crust of a very stale loaf, and that there had been no butter in the house for two days, she put the thought quickly from her, by thinking that it certainly would not make matters better for her mother by her remaining at home to share the poverty with her. Anna did not know, or perhaps she did not choose to remember, how much easier it is to bear poverty and illness when we have the love and sympathy of our nearest and dearest ones, to support and comfort us in the trial.

Anna spent a very merry evening, and was just thinking that it was time for her to be returning home, when there was a low tap at the outer door of the house, and one of Farmer Smith's daughters went to see who was there.

"It's a tramp, mother," she said, coming in again, "such a strange-looking old thing. She won't go

away, she says, without your giving her something. Do go and look at her, Anna; you never saw such a miserable-looking wretch in your life, I'll be bound. I'm sure the sight of her will haunt me."

Mrs. Smith went out, and Anna followed her. The beggar was certainly a wretched specimen of that wretched class of beings. She was very dirty and very withered, and her dress and cloak were reduced to tatters. She wore no bonnet, but the hood of her tattered cloak was drawn over her wrinkled face, and gave her a wild and savage look.

"Good evening, Madam Smith," she said. "I be come back you see; and I wasn't a-going to pass your snug bit of a home without a-coming in to get a drop of something warm to keep out the cold. You don't know me it seems. 'Tain't much wonder you shouldn't, for I reckon I've altered a bit from what I was when I left this, five and twenty years ago, as smart a lass as any of your bonny maids. They were babies in their cradles then; they be fine ladies, I see, now, and, I dare say, think themselves mighty grand. Do you think, now, they'll ever come to be like me? 'cause you see I was just like them once—just as handsome, and as proud, and as fine."

And the woman gave a sort of wild chuckle,

which, combined with her whole appearance and manner of speaking, made Mrs. Smith conclude that she was not in her right mind, and made her also very anxious to get rid of her.

But this was not so easily done. The woman was determined to come in, and Farmer Smith not having returned home, and Mrs. Smith, and her daughters, and Anna, all feeling afraid of opposing her, she gained her point, and came right into the kitchen, where she sat herself down on a stool before the wide fire-place, and began warming her long, thin hands before the fire. Anna, meanwhile, feeling most uncomfortable, for she felt that she ought to be at home, and yet she dreaded proposing to return, lest the strange, wild woman should offer to accompany her on the road.

"You don't know me, Madam Smith?" the woman said, with another chuckle. "Well, I be Peggy Watson."

Mrs. Smith started.

"Ah, you know me now," the woman continued, "and I reckon you don't much fancy my company at your fireside. Never mind, though, I won't do you no harm. I've given up killing people now."

And seeing the involuntary shudder which Anna

gave at the idea of being in such close company with any one who had been guilty of such an awful act as murder, Peggy turned sharply round upon her, and said—

"Don't you put yourself in a fright now. I ain't a-going to hurt you; only, you see, *I killed my mother!*" and raising her shrill voice almost to a scream, she repeated again and again, "Yes, I killed my mother. I killed my mother!"

The girls were terrified, and Mrs. Smith, to quiet them, said—

"Don't believe what she says. She didn't kill her mother. Old Mrs. Watson died in her bed. I knew her quite well. Peggy was a bad girl, and a bad daughter, but she never killed her mother any more than I killed her."

"Ay, but she did, though!" exclaimed the woman. "I be gone daft, the folks say, and I'm being returned on my own parish because they won't have me wandering about the country frightening the country folk with my wild talk. But whether I be daft or sane, I know well enough, and a little too well, what I've done, and what I haven't done, and I tell ye *I killed my mother.* She died in her bed, it's true for ye, but for all that I killed her. Not with my hands; oh, no!"

and she waved her shrunken hands over her head. "No, not with my hands. They won't be pinned down and handcuffed like as they would be if 'twas them that had done the work. But for all that *I killed my mother.* It wasn't what men call killing, but it's what the great Judge up in heaven calls killing. I didn't break her head, but I broke her heart; and I'll just tell you how. You young ones can do it too; but oh, I would warn you to mind how you set about it, for it's a business that brings an awful curse along with it. I wouldn't heed my mother ever. I would always give her bad words, when she never gave me naught but good ones. I treated her as bad as ever I could, and last of all, I run right off, and left her, the poor old woman, to die by herself; and that's how I killed my mother, and ever since then I've been a-wandering up hill and down dale, never making a friend, always a-begging my way along, until here I am again. They say 'twas the way the Lord punished the first murderer, that He sent him roving about everywhere, carrying his misery and his sin along with him, and it's pretty much in the same way that He's punishing me now, because, you see, I killed my mother."

By this time Mrs. Smith's two girls were getting accustomed to the poor demented woman's talk, and

were rather amused by it than otherwise; but Anna Churchill, what could be the matter with Anna? She had rushed to the other end of the kitchen, and hiding her face in both her hands, was standing there sobbing so violently, that her whole frame shook. Even Peggy's attention was at length arrested by her, and, rising from her stool, she exclaimed—

"What ails the bairn, I wonder? Don't you be frightened with my wild talk. No harm will come to you, my dear. It only comes to me, you see, because *I killed my mother.*"

At this moment Farmer Smith entered the house, and most thankful were his wife and daughters to see him. He soon understood the state of things; and making Peggy leave the house, he undertook to see the agitated Anna safely home. On their way he gave her a short account of Peggy Watson's early life, how she had been a wicked and undutiful child to a widowed mother, and how she had finally run away from her house to marry a wild young man, who had abandoned her very soon after their marriage, since which she had been, Mr. Smith had heard, wandering over the country, "quite gone in her head," but she had not come back to Croydon till now.

"It's a warning," the farmer said, "to all girls.

I wish mine would lay it to heart, for they are not too obedient or submissive as it is."

And Anna, was it not a warning to her? A warning so extraordinary, that she could not help feeling as though Peggy Watson must have been sent to that house that night, expressly to arrest her in her own undutiful conduct before it was too late. She longed to be at home. She wondered her father had not come to see after her, for it was so late, and her mother knew that she had gone to Croydon. But no sooner had Anna reached home, than this was explained. As she opened the door, a neighbour called to her to come upstairs quickly, for her mother was dying. She had broken a blood-vessel about an hour before, and, the doctor thought, might not long be in this world. Half wild with agony and remorse, Anna flew to her mother's bedside in such a state of excitement, that she was taken away to another room, and not allowed for several days again to approach her mother's sick-bed. All those days Anna spent in crying, and accusing herself of having killed her mother. And when at length she was told that her mother was out of danger, and that if she could compose herself she might see her, she fell upon her knees in gratitude to that God who had saved her from the same sin which

had driven Peggy Watson into the despair of unavailing remorse.

If Mrs. Churchill had died that evening, Anna might indeed have gone to her own grave with the feeling that she too had helped to kill her mother by all her undutiful conduct, and her unfeeling neglect. But God in his mercy delivered her from such a trial. Mrs. Churchill did not die, but lived to see her only child an altered character, and to find in her a devoted help and an unfailing support and comfort.

From that day the Churchills' worldly prospects improved gradually, until they were soon living once more in the enjoyment of comfort and prosperity. Mrs. Churchill was always very delicate, but Anna exerted herself by every means in her power to take her mother's place in the house; and no one who had seen their well-ordered, happy little home only a year after the scene I have described would have imagined that it could have been the same house which Anna Churchill had quitted on the evening she went to Croydon, and heard Peggy Watson declare that she had *killed her mother*.

LUCY'S THOUGHTS; OR, THE UNTRAINED HORSE.

Mrs. Bentley sat at her writing-table in the little breakfast-parlour, where she generally spent the morning; and her little daughter Lucy sat on a low chair in a corner of the same room, with her books on a table by her side.

Mrs. Bentley was writing a letter, and it was easy to see that her mind was engaged in the occupation before her, for her pen moved steadily on, and her eyes were not raised from the paper. Lucy was supposed to be busily engaged, also, in preparing her lessons for her daily governess; but it was equally easy to see that Lucy's whole mind was *not* taken up with the work which, at that moment, she had in hand. She sat idly back in her chair, with a book in her hand, and occasionally her eyes were fixed upon its pages, but they never remained there long. Two

minutes afterwards they were wandering all round the room—now looking at the different pictures which hung upon the walls, now watching the movements of her mamma's two canaries, as they hopped from one perch to another in their gay prison.

Her mamma did not take any notice of her for some time. She wrote busily away at her letter until it was finished, which was just as the servant came in to say the man had called for the letters; and then, turning to Lucy, she asked her if her lessons were all learned?

"Oh no, mamma," said Lucy, "not half. I only know a little bit of my geography, and not any of my French or poetry."

"And in half an hour we must go out," said her mother; "and Miss Palmer will be here immediately after our return."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Lucy, "I am sure I shall never be able to learn them in half an hour."

"I am very sorry for it," replied her mother; "but I cannot allow you to lose your walk. You have had plenty of time to learn all those lessons if only you had given your mind to them; but this, I am sure, you have not done. I could not pay any attention to you, because I was obliged to finish my letter

for the post, and consequently you have been wasting your time."

Lucy began to cry, but this did not mend matters, and only took up a good deal of the little remaining time she had to bestow upon her lessons. Her mamma showed her this, and that the wiser way would be to dry her eyes and begin at once; and so at length she did, but before she had made much progress, the clock struck the half-hour, and she had to put away her books and go out.

Lucy's walks with her mamma were always very pleasant, for Mrs. Bentley generally found something new to tell her little girl; and although, unfortunately, Lucy was not, as yet, very fond of her books, she delighted in the information which her mamma gave her on all sorts of subjects. But to-day's walk was not a very bright one; Mrs. Bentley was not pleased with Lucy, and Lucy was very sorry to have vexed her. She was thinking, too, how angry Miss Palmer would be when she found that the lessons were not known, and how she would be sure to give her a bad mark, which bad mark must be shown to grandpapa when they went to dine with him on Saturday.

Grandpapa was very fond of Lucy, and took a great deal of interest in her lessons, and always made

her bring her book with her on Saturdays, to show him how she had got on during the week; and Lucy did not like to think of the grave look which she knew his kind face would wear at the sight of the bad mark. So that she felt very unhappy during her walk; and her mamma did not seem to care about making her less so, for she allowed her to walk along by her side quite silently, without saying a word to her.

Lucy did not like this at all. She would much rather that her mamma had talked to her, even if it had been to find fault with her, and show her how wrong she had been. Anything would be better than being left alone with her unhappy thoughts.

Mrs. Bentley could guess pretty well what was passing in Lucy's mind. She read it in her face; but she thought that Lucy's unhappy thoughts were just the best companions she could have at that moment, and so she would not say anything which might divert her from them.

Miss Palmer had already arrived when Lucy and her mamma reached home. Of course the lessons were very imperfectly said, and the bad mark was entered into the book. It was not often that Lucy had a bad mark, but then it was not often that Mrs.

Bentley had to write a letter by the early post; and although she never actually helped Lucy to prepare her lessons for her governess, she was generally working in the same room with her, and kept her attention to her books by constantly reminding her when she saw that her eyes were wandering from them.

Lucy was very unhappy all the afternoon and evening, thinking of her bad mark, the first she had had that year; and when she went to bed she told her mamma that the next day she was determined to learn her lessons perfectly, without missing a single word.

"Then I must not have any letters to write," said her mother, "and must keep you constantly at work."

"No, mamma," said Lucy, confidently, "I mean to learn without even your reminding me. I told Miss Palmer I knew it was because you were writing a letter, and did not attend to me, and she said I ought to attend to myself, and be attentive without your looking after me."

"Miss Palmer is quite right, Lucy," said her mamma; "but perhaps she does not know what a very inattentive little girl we have here, when she is left quite to herself. I have sometimes thought, Lucy, that it would be almost as easy to make one of

those canaries remain quiet on its perch for half an hour as to keep you still."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Lucy. "Well, I mean to begin to-morrow, and you shall see how steadily I will sit at my lessons for a whole hour after breakfast. You shall not speak a word to me, and you will see if I can't fix my attention. I am *determined* this time."

"Very well, Lucy," said her mother, "as you say, we shall see."

And Lucy kissed her mamma, and went away to bed, full of this new determination. She forgot that she had been *determined* to remember to feed her rabbit every day, and how the gardener had one day found it dead in the hutch. She forgot how she had been *determined* not to make one blot in her new copy-book, and had not reached the fourth page before it was just as full of blots and smears as the last had been.

And Lucy had *determined* on a great many other things of the same kind, all of which determinations had lasted about a week—sometimes not so long. But Lucy did not think about them now. She was full of her new resolutions. She went to bed thinking of them, and got up thinking of them; and the

moment prayers and breakfast were over, and she had finished her usual Scripture reading with her mother, she took her own little chair, and her own little table, and all her books, and set to work at her lessons. She wrote her exercise very well, and did not find much difficulty in keeping her mind upon it. Then she took her poetry; but before she had learnt the first verse, her eyes fell on a new picture on the wall, quite a new one. "It had not been there the day before! Where could it have come from? Had grandpapa sent it?" She was just turning round to ask her mamma, when she remembered her resolution not to speak about anything until she had finished her lessons; or perhaps something in her mamma's face recalled it to her recollection; and she turned back to the table, and took up her poetry book. But there was the picture straight in front of her, and she could not help looking at it. It was a very pretty picture, too—a water-colour painting of Grace Darling and her father, rowing against the raging winds and stormy waters towards the land; and as Lucy looked at it, she thought how brave Grace Darling must have been, and wondered whether she was the bravest woman that ever lived—whether she was braver than Joan of Arc, who was not afraid to dash forward on

her white horse, and force her way through the enemy's soldiers, in order to carry provisions into the beleaguered city of Orleans.

Lucy might have gone on thinking about Grace Darling and Joan of Arc, and their comparative bravery, a good deal longer, if her mamma had not got up from her work-table, and left the room. This recalled Lucy's mind to what she ought to be doing, and again she took up her book, and, her mamma being out of the room, began to repeat the verses aloud, by way of making the task easier. But as soon as she began to recite, the canaries began to sing; and Lucy, in order to quiet them, threw her handkerchief at them. Then they began to fly about the cage in great alarm, and Lucy, as she watched them, remembered what her mamma had said last night about making one of them sit quiet on its perch for half an hour.

This set Lucy's mind going in another direction. She wondered whether it would be possible to make a canary keep still for half an hour; whether canaries could be taught to do all sorts of things, like other birds she had read of; how they could be taught, and a great deal more on the same subject, until she had nearly forgotten the lesson before her; when her

mamma returned to the room, and told her it was time for her to go and put on her bonnet.

"Were the lessons all learned?"

"Not quite all," said Lucy, and she blushed very red. "I began very well, mamma, but then——"

Lucy stopped, and her mamma said, "But then, you forgot."

"Not exactly forgot, mamma, but my thoughts would wander away. I can't think how it is, but I *cannot* keep my mind on one thing. I do try, mamma, but really it's impossible."

Her mother smiled.

"You don't think so, mamma," said Lucy, "and I don't mean that it is impossible for you, but I am sure it is for me."

"Well," said her mamma, "go and put on your hat now, and we will talk about the impossibility of the thing during our walk. You have done your exercise very neatly I see, and you know some of your lessons."

"Yes, mamma, and I shall have time to learn the others when I come in, as Miss Palmer comes an hour later on Fridays."

"It was a good day for you to begin your experiment of learning your lessons all by yourself," replied

her mother. "I thought of that, or I do not think I should have allowed you to attempt it, for I guessed beforehand how it would end."

"You never trust me, mamma," said Lucy.

"Do you deserve to be trusted?" asked her mother. "But now get your hat, and let us go for our walk."

Lucy was soon ready, and her first question, as she put her hand in her mother's, and walked by her side, was—

"But, mamma, isn't it very difficult to keep one's thoughts just where they ought to be? I can prevent myself from doing things, and often I almost bite my lips to keep myself from saying something that I know is wrong or angry; but it is so difficult not to let one's thoughts go where they like."

"Very difficult indeed, Lucy," said her mother, "but very necessary."

"But you say you can do it, mamma," returned Lucy. "Why should it be easier for you than for me?"

But, instead of answering this question, her mother asked her another—

"Do you remember, Lucy, how much trouble your papa had yesterday in persuading the new horse to

take us properly to Stapleton? Why do you think he found it so much more difficult to drive him than Charger?"

"Why, mamma?" replied Lucy, surprised at her mother's asking her so simple a question. "Why, of course, papa is accustomed to drive Charger, and Charger is an old horse, and is used to be driven; but the new horse is young, and not accustomed to harness. Papa said it would take a long time before he was broken in."

"Perhaps, Lucy," said her mamma, smiling, "these troublesome thoughts of yours, of which you complain so much, are something like papa's new horse—they are not accustomed to be driven; they want breaking-in."

Lucy's bright little face grew still brighter with the look of intelligence that passed over it. She dearly loved her mother's little comparisons, which were always very easy and simple, and made hard things seem quite clear.

"I believe it is that, mamma," she said. "Yes, I am sure my mind is just like our new horse; it won't go where I want it to go, it will always be running away with me somewhere or other, and, try as hard as I can, I can't always keep it in. And your mind

is like Charger, mamma, always going in right places, and doing the work you want it to do so wisely and usefully."

"My mind is very much obliged to you for your compliment," said Mrs. Bentley, laughing; "but, since we have begun this comparison, I think we had better carry it a little further. Tell me, Lucy, what is the chief difference between papa's new horse, that gave us all so much trouble yesterday, and this wise, useful old Charger, of whom you seem to think so highly."

"The chief difference!" exclaimed Lucy. "Why, I suppose, mamma, the chief difference is, that Charger is an old horse and the new one is quite young—almost too young, papa said, to be useful yet."

"And my little daughter is eight," said Mrs. Bentley, "and her mamma is thirty-eight, just thirty years older. That is rather a difference, Lucy."

"Oh yes, mamma!" exclaimed Lucy, in still greater delight, and she clapped her hands, which was her usual way of showing her satisfaction when anything especially pleased her. "Oh yes, mamma, I see now quite well. The old horse is old, and the young one is new; and so he does not know any-

thing scarcely, and is wild and unbroken, and not of much use. I am only a little girl now, and so I am wild and giddy; but when I am old I shall be sensible and steady too, and my mind will be like the useful horse, it will go where it ought."

"Stop, stop, Lucy!" exclaimed her mamma, "you go a little too fast. Do you think it is only his age that has taught our good old Charger to be so useful, and go through his daily work in quiet, regular order?"

"Why no, mamma," replied Lucy, "it isn't only his age that has taught him. I remember papa said he had had a great deal of trouble in training him too."

"Yes, Lucy," said her mother, "it is training that has made our good Charger such a useful servant to us—steady, persevering training. He was wild enough at first, and liked being in harness quite as little as papa's new horse; but papa was very determined with him too, and kept a tight hand over him, and exercised him regularly, until, little by little, he became trained to his work."

"And am I to treat my mind as papa treats his horses?" asked Lucy, laughing. "But who is to drive my thoughts, mamma?"

"Yourself, Lucy," replied her mother; "nobody else can do it for you. I can control your actions

when you are with me, and prevent your doing what I do not approve of; and I can control your words, and tell you what you must or must not say; but your thoughts are completely beyond my control."

"And I think, mamma," said Lucy, "they are beyond mine too, for they are stronger than I am, and break away when I try to keep them in; so what am I to do?"

Again Mrs. Bentley answered her little girl's question by another. "What did Hector do the other day, Lucy, when papa let him try to drive, and he found he could not manage the horses?"

"He gave up the reins to papa, and he drove instead."

"And have you no Father, Lucy, to whom you can give over the government of this troublesome little mind of yours, when you find that you cannot keep it in order yourself?"

"You mean, mamma," said Lucy, "that God would govern it for me."

"Yes, Lucy, God will do to you exactly as your father does when he sees you cannot perform a work by yourself; He will do it for you if you ask Him, and He will show you how to do it yourself. You remember what trouble papa took to teach Hector to

hold the reins, how he showed him his mistakes, and helped and encouraged him?"

"Oh yes, mamma, and I think I understand what you mean."

"Then, Lucy," said her mother very gravely, "begin at once. Ask God now to take the government of your heart into his hands, and to teach you how to control and regulate your thoughts, and I can promise you that He will hear your prayer, and that every day you will find that through his help the difficult work will become easier and easier."

"Was that the way you began, mamma?" asked Lucy.

"Yes, Lucy, and not only the way I began, but the way I go on. My mind is by nature just like yours. It delights in going its own way. Many years ago, when I was young like you, I had no control over it, and like you I despaired of ever having any; but then God showed me what I hope He is now going to show you, that if I would give up my heart to Him, He would rule it for me."

"And has it been easy to you to rule it ever since, mamma?" asked Lucy.

Her mother smiled, but it was a very grave, thoughtful smile.

"It became much easier, Lucy, dear," she said, "and every day made it more and more easy. But my mind is like yours, and like that of everybody else. It is naturally rebellious, and often it tries to break away from the restraints which God lays upon it."

"And will it always be so?" asked Lucy, and there was a little mournfulness in her tone, for she had already begun to look forward to the happy day when her mind should not give her any more trouble. "I thought, mamma, you said my mind would grow one day to be like Charger, so steady and well-trained, it would not wish any more to break out of harness, or run away with us into dangerous places."

"Charger is in very good order," said her mother, "he is a steady and faithful servant; but would you like to sit in the carriage, and trust to Charger to take you safely to Stapleton and back, without any one to drive him?"

"Oh no, mamma!" exclaimed Lucy, "of course I should not. The carriage would be dashed to pieces long before we got there."

"Certainly it would," said her mother. "Charger will work very well if he has some one to drive him, to show him the way in which he must go, to urge him forward when he requires urging, to check him when

he would go too fast, to use the whip when he would go wrong. You see, Lucy, it is not only necessary that the servant should be well trained and fitted for his work; it is necessary, also, that he should be constantly under the guiding and restraining hand of a wise master. And so, dear Lucy, it is the same Master who first trains the servant for his own service, who must ever after lead and guide him. Do you not see what I would wish you to understand by this?"

"I think I do, mamma," said Lucy, gravely; "you mean that God must be our Master."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bentley, "if ever you wish to be of any use either to Him or to your fellow-creatures, you must be trained by God, and when you are trained so that your will has become submissive to his, and you are content to be led and guided by Him, then you must remain constantly under his direction, running in the path which He Himself appoints, and obeying his every wish and command."

"It must be very difficult, mamma," said Lucy.

"Difficult because we have such self-willed, rebellious hearts. When you were a baby, Lucy, I had no trouble in making you go where I wished. I could take you anywhere I chose. You knew no will but mine."

"No, mamma, of course I did not, because I was too little to have any will of my own."

"That is just it, Lucy. When you grew older you began to have a will of your own, and sometimes it rebelled against mine, and it was no longer an easy task to lead and guide you. And so it is with us, and our heavenly Father. Our wicked hearts rebel against Him and his authority. We don't like to be led by Him. We want to go our own way. And so we oblige Him to correct us in order to teach us to submit to Him. If we were only willing to obey, we should be spared all correction. You know, Lucy, if papa's horse would only obey the rein, papa would never use the whip."

"No, of course not," replied Lucy. "He is much too kind. He said only yesterday, he could not bear punishing him."

"Nor does our kind Father in heaven like punishing us, Lucy, only He must do it in order to bring our rebellious wills into training, and lead us to run in the right path."

Lucy walked on silently for a little while, and then she said, "I should like to go always in the right path, mamma."

"Then," said Mrs. Bentley, "ask God to lead you. Give yourself up entirely to Jesus. Go to Him now

while you are yet young, and ask Him to take your heart and wash away all its many sins in his own precious blood, and to take it into his own gracious keeping, leading, guiding, and restraining it continually by the direction of his own Holy Spirit."

Again Lucy was silent, nor did she say anything more during the remainder of her walk. But this conversation was not lost upon her. That evening, after she had finished her usual Scripture reading with her mother, she laid down her Bible, and looking up in her mamma's face with a much graver expression of countenance than was usual to her, she said, "I have thought about what you told me all day, dear mamma, and I have asked God to train my mind now while I am young, so that it may be able to do the work which it has to do, and may not be always running where it ought not to go. And to-morrow I am going to try all over again, and every time my thoughts are tempted to wander away, I will pray to God to bring them back."

"Then," said her mother, "I shall have some hopes of seeing my little girl really applying herself to her duties. She has *determined* to do so many times before, but I do not think this *determination* is made in the same sort of spirit."

"No, mamma," said Lucy, "it is not."

Nor was it. The determinations which Lucy had often before made, to apply herself to her duties and overcome the want of steadiness in her character, which gave her mamma and governess so much trouble, had never been of any duration, for they had all been made in her own strength, or rather, I should say, in her own weakness. But this resolution was made trusting to a strength superior to her own. And the same strength that led her to make it, enabled her to keep it.

Lucy began, as she had hoped to do, quite a new life on the following day. Her mother had told her that the training must begin in little things, and Lucy did not forget this. Whatever she had to do, she tried to look upon it as part of the work appointed her by her Father in heaven, and she prayed to Him to train her mind for the work, and enable her to do it aright. The lessons which used to be a toil, before long became a real source of interest and pleasure to her; and many a time afterwards, as Lucy shut her books, and prepared to go out with her mamma, did she say, with a beaming face, "Oh, mamma! how well I remember that day when you made me see that my mind was like papa's unbroken horse, which was of so little use, because it was not properly trained and taught to do the work which it had to do."

PUNISHMENT; OR, THE FAITHFUL PARENT.

Mrs. Stanley was a widow lady who lived in a large house close to the village of Grantley, and her little son Edward was her only child. He was in consequence his mamma's constant companion, and it was very seldom indeed that Mrs. Stanley was to be seen without her little boy. If she sat at home, working in the pleasant bow-window of the pretty drawing-room which opened on the lawn, Edward sat beside her, generally with a book in his hand, from which he would read aloud, while his dear mamma explained to him the things that he was reading about. If his mamma went into the garden, Edward went too, and followed her up and down the gravel walks, and amongst the flower-beds, carrying a little basket, which it was his delight to fill with withered leaves and bits of stick, so that he might feel himself of some

use in helping his mother. If she went into the village, and a great deal of Mrs. Stanley's time was spent in the village, Edward was sure to be seen by her side, holding her hand, unless, indeed, which was not unfrequently the case, he wanted the use of both his little hands, to enable him to carry the same white basket which was so useful in the garden and which was still more useful in his walks to the village, for then it would be filled, not with leaves and flowers, but with different little presents for the poor people, a small packet of tea for Goody Stone, or a packet of gruel for Mrs. Simm's sick baby, or some sugar for old Thomson, or a pinafore as a reward for some little boy who was in Edward's own class at the Sunday-school. For though Edward was not yet eight years old, he had a little class of his own every Sunday. It consisted of five little boys whose ages varied from four to six, and whom Edward took the greatest delight in teaching, hearing them read, and making them repeat some of the many little hymns he knew himself. Every one in the village knew Edward Stanley, "the little Squire," as the poor people generally called him. For Edward's papa had been the Squire of the place, and nearly every cottage in the village had belonged to him, and when Edward should have grown to be a

man, he would be Squire too, and the cottages would all belong to him, and he would be a great man and a rich man. This was why his dear mamma was so very anxious to teach him, while he was yet young and tender, to be very kind and loving to the poor, and respectful and considerate in his behaviour to all, whether they were high or low. For Mrs. Stanley knew that honours and riches are a very great temptation to any one who possesses them, and that it requires a great deal of grace to enable any one to carry them in a humble lowly spirit, and her earnest prayer and constant desire were that, long before her little boy should be old enough to take possession of all his riches and honours, his heart might be so filled with humility and lowliness that there might be no room for pride or vainglory to steal in.

Little Edward was his mother's delight and joy, the one great comfort of her heart, the one bright sunbeam that had been left to dance and play merrily across her path, when her husband had been taken from her, which great sorrow had been to her, as when the clouds gather thick and dark over the sky, and shut out its pleasant light. But Mrs. Stanley did not spoil her little son. She loved him a great deal too well for that, and though Edward was in general a very

docile and obedient child, he knew what punishment was. The heaviest punishment that could be given to him was when he was not allowed to go out with his mamma, and this punishment had been his only the day before, when he had displeased her by going into a passion, and speaking very rudely to one of the servants.

It was the next day now, and Mrs. Stanley was not thinking any more about her little boy's offence, or the punishment which she had been obliged to inflict upon him.

But Edward thought about it, and there was a look upon his little face which was not at all usual to it—a grave sad look. He had been learning his lessons, but his mamma had told him she would not be ready to hear them until she had finished a letter she was writing, and he was sitting quietly by the window, with his books open on his knee, looking out upon the lawn. Mrs. Stanley finished her letter, and called her little boy to her side. She remarked the look upon his face—for there are not many looks on little children's faces which their anxious, loving mothers do not see—but she did not say anything until Edward had said all his lessons so nicely he did not miss a word. And then she put her arm round her little son,

and, drawing him fondly towards her, asked him why he looked so grave.

Now there was not a thought in Edward's mind which he was not always ready to tell to his mamma, so he said, "I was thinking about yesterday."

"But I am not thinking about it," said his mamma; it is quite forgiven—I do not think of it any more—it is to me just as if it had never been."

"Yes," said Edward, "I know it is to you, mamma, but it is not to me."

"And why not, Edward?"

"I don't know, mamma," he answered; "I don't quite know why, but I feel to-day as if I could not be as happy as usual."

"It is not because you love me less?" said his mother.

"Oh no, mamma," he answered quickly, "for it seems to me as if I loved you more."

"And it is not because you think that I love you less?" said his mother; "you know, Edward, how much it grieves me to punish you, and that I only do so from the love I feel for you."

"Oh yes, mamma, it is not that," he answered; "I think it is because I love you so much, and I know you love me so much, and I am so very very sorry to

have vexed you," and Edward threw his arms round his mamma's neck and burst into tears.

"I knew it was that, Edward dear," said his mother, "but I wanted to see if you knew it too. Your sorrow does not make me unhappy, it makes me very thankful, for it shows me that you really love your mother, and understand aright the meaning and the end of her correction."

But Edward did not quite understand this, and his mamma explained her meaning as she always did everything which was beyond her little boy's understanding. "I saw a little girl punished yesterday," she said, "and I will tell you about it now. She was playing with her little sister, and there was some quarrel between them about a doll; the little girl grew very angry, and struck her sister a violent blow, which made her scream, and the mother heard the scream and came to inquire what was the matter, and, when she found out what the elder child had done, she punished her—the doll was taken from her and she was shut up in a closet for half an hour. I was at the house at the time, and, half an hour afterwards, happening to call in again on my way home, I found the mother unlocking the door of the closet to let her child out. She ran at once to get her doll

again, and, without even looking at her mother, or expressing a word of sorrow, she ran out in the yard to play, and, two minutes after, I saw her playing just as merrily, and heard her laughing just as loudly, as though she had never been punished at all, though her mother told me that all the time she had been locked up in the closet she had not stopped crying and imploring to be allowed to come out. She did not like the pnnishment, but I am afraid, when once that was over, she did not care about the sin which had occasioned it, or about the sorrow it had given her mother. Hers was not the sorrow of love. I hope, Edward, yours is?"

"I *know* it is, mamma," said Edward; "I know it is because I love you that I can't bear to vex you."

"And if you loved Jesus, Edward, you could not bear to vex *Him*," replied his mother; "that is what I long for you to feel, such love to Jesus that, when you are in sorrow for some wrong thing that you have done, you may think that you can *see* the look of sorrow on the face of Jesus, and mourn because you have offended Him who is so good a friend to you—a better friend than I can be."

"If I could see Jesus as I do you, mamma," said Edward, "it would be easier."

"Ask Him to make you see Him," said his mother. "Ask Him every day until He answers your prayer, and opens the eyes of your mind to see Jesus just as plainly as you see me."

Edward thought he would pray this every day, for he knew that Jesus was just as truly his friend as his own mamma was, only that he could not always feel that He was, because it is so difficult to feel anything that we do not see.

"And now, Edward," said his mother, "we will put away our lesson-books, and go into the village. And first we will go to see old Master Thomson. Mary tells me he has had a letter from his poor son in Australia, and I know he will be longing to tell me all about it."

So Mrs. Stanley and her little son put on their walking things, and went to see old Master Thomson.

They found him, as usual, alone in his little cottage, propped up in his bed by the window with cushions, which neighbour Watkins had arranged comfortably for him that morning, when she had come in to do up his room and give him his breakfast. At twelve o'clock she would come again to give him his dinner, and again at six o'clock, when she would lock the

cottage door and take the key home with her, leaving old Thomson locked up alone all night.

Edward often wondered how Thomson could make up his mind to live always alone; but the old man preferred it to leaving the cottage, which belonged to him, and where he had lived for sixty long years, and taking up his abode with some one of the neighbours. Edward used to say sometimes that it must be dreadfully lonely; but Thomson would lay his hand upon the boy's head, and say, "The Christian is never alone where Christ is, young master; and, happily for him, he can never be placed where Christ is not." And when Edward would ask him if he did not feel afraid, he would answer, "Never a bit, Master Edward; for I just ask my Father up in heaven to take care of me, and I know that He listens to the prayer of a lonely old man like me just as much as if I were the greatest king in the world. There isn't any respect of persons with Him. It's all one to Him whether He feeds the most splendid creature the world has got to boast of, or the poorest little sparrow that hops about on the window-sill here. And I know He takes as much thought for a lone old man like me in my bit of a house as ever He does for our gracious Majesty herself on her throne, where may He long keep her."

But Mrs. Stanley had told Edward that, happy as old Thomson now was, he had not always been so happy, and that he had known a great deal of sorrow in his life. Edward did not quite know what this sorrow had been, but he thought it must be connected with Thomson's only son, of whom he often spoke, but whom Edward had never seen, for he had not been at Grantley since Edward was born. Old Thomson always called him "my poor boy," and Edward generally observed that when he spoke about him his eyes would fill with tears and his hand shake with agitation.

He had heard Thomson say that his son was going to Australia some time ago, and now his mamma told him that the old man had heard of his arrival, but he did not know where Thomson's son had been before he went to Australia, or why it was that he never came to see his poor old father.

When they came into the cottage, they found the old man sitting up as usual in his bed, close to the small latticed window, and in his hand he held an open letter. Edward did not wonder why he held it there, for though he knew the old man could not read a word of it, he could quite understand the feeling which led him to keep it tightly grasped in his hand.

At sight of Mrs. Stanley, however, he held it out to her, exclaiming, "Thank God you be come, my lady. I long to see you ofttimes, but I don't think as ever I've pined for the sight of ye as I have done this blessed morning. Yes, *blessed* morning; I use the word with all proper reverence, for sure it's a blessed morn that brings such a letter as this to a father, in answer to his many prayers for the beloved son that was lost and is found."

"But you have heard the letter read before this, I hope," said Mrs. Stanley, kindly. "I did not know you had received it until about an hour ago, or I should have come down earlier."

"Thank ye kindly, my lady," replied the old man. "I knew as how it would give you pleasure to hear it, and so I just got neighbour Watkins to let her grandson take up word for me to the House. The old woman, she read me the letter, but she is not much of a scholar, and her reading ain't like yours. My heart just longs to hear you read it out without stop or falter."

Mrs. Stanley looked at Edward, and the old man, noticing her look, said, "There's no secret there the young master mayn't hear."

And little Edward, who would have been very much

concerned if he had heard there *had* been, for he was all anxiety to hear Thomson's letter, listened attentively while his mamma read.

DEAR AND HONOURED FATHER,—You will thank God to hear the news which I thank God I now have to tell. I am safely arrived in this country, and have had no trouble in finding work with good wages, such as I could not get in England. In three months I hope, please God, to send you home a good sum of money from my earnings, and I know you will see to its being sent there where it ought to go. If you can't manage it, and I don't suppose you can, I know Madam Stanley will see to it if you hand it over to her. All I can earn for some time to come must go there, and then, dear father, I will send what I can for you. The Lord has forgiven me, I know, but I can't forgive myself. I think I shall feel easier in my mind when all the money's paid back. God grant I may one day see you again in this world, and if not, may we meet in that place where there will be no more sin, and no more temptation. I think on that verse which says, the Lord will cast all our sins behind Him. Mine are often before me now, and, though I believe they are all washed clean away in the blood

which can wash out the very blackest of sins, yet the thought of them presses hard on my heart often, especially when I think of all the sorrow they have brought upon your grey hairs. I feel I am not worthy to be called your son, much less to look up to God, and call Him my Father. But when I think of all your forgiveness and love, it makes it more easy for me to believe in His. And I just keep hold of that text in Isaiah, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

This freedom is indeed a blessing, for though I believe I had seen that punishment was well deserved, and must be borne patiently, I did so long to make what amends I could on earth to them that I had injured. Soon I hope to write again, but I lose no time in letting you know of my arrival. I trust this will find you pretty well, and send my grateful respects to Madam Stanley. So no more at present from your penitent and grateful son,

STEPHEN THOMSON.

"Now, isn't that something to thank the Lord for?" exclaimed old Thomson, as Mrs. Stanley folded the letter and returned it to him, saying she would

come again the next day, as he might like to hear it again.

"I'll know it by heart soon," he said; "neighbour Watkins will spell it over again by and by, and I will be able to set her right with the hard words, now that I know them myself." And then turning to Edward, he said, "You don't understand the old man's joy, young master, but you ask your mamma to tell you a bit about my son's story. I don't mind thinking about it now, though there was a time when the thought of him was pain like a sharp sword at my heart; but now the Lord has given him back to me a second time, I'm willing others should know of his mercy. And one thing, young master, I say to you. I hear you were a bit punished yesterday."

Edward's face was crimson at once, but the old man laid his hand on his head.

"There, don't you be vexed at that. I only came to know it because Mary the maid she came in this morning with the soup madam sent, and when I said to her, I had been looking to see you all day yesterday, because as how it was mostly on a Tuesday you came, she said, 'Master Edward's not been out to-day, Thomson.' And when I says 'as how I hope the young Squire he ain't ill,' she just makes answer,

'Why no, but she believed he hadn't been very obedient, and so his mamma she would not let him out.' Now that set me thinking, and thinks I, 'What a mercy it is madam don't make the mistake I made, and let her only son have all his own way. 'Twas not from love I did it, it was just from weakness, and the Lord He punished me sore for going right against his holy law, which tells the father to punish his son and spare not for his crying. Ah, if I had minded that story of Eli in the Book, I might have taken warning, but my eyes were blind. I thank God, young master, your mamma's are not, and God give her the grace to correct you aright, though you are the joy of her eyes, as I know full well you are. 'Tis a proof of her love. *My* Father (up in heaven, for I don't remember my father on earth) He punished me sore for disobeying Him, and what I mourn for most is that I should have so sinned against his law."

Mrs. Stanley and her little son took leave of old Thomson, and when they were again walking homeward, Mrs. Stanley said—

"I think, Edward, we have seen something of real repentance this morning. You heard that letter read?"

"Yes, mamma," said Edward; "will you tell me

what Thomson's son had done? Did he ever live here? Did you know him?"

"Yes, Edward, very well. He was a lad of thirteen when first your dear papa and I came to live here, very handsome and clever, but very wilful and disobedient, and his father (his mother was dead) had no control over him; he had so indulged him when he was little, that he had lost all authority over him. He wished him to learn farming, and remain near him; but Stephen had no liking for country pursuits, and against his father's entreaties he would be apprenticed to a tradesman at Dallington. There he got into bad company, and at last he wrote to tell his father he wished to go on board a merchantman, and to ask him to send him money to buy clothes for the voyage. This Thomson refused to do, for he could not bear the idea of his only son going so far from him. His refusal enraged the wilful boy, and the next thing the poor old man heard of him was that he had run away from Dallington with a sum of money he had stolen from his master, and that the police were looking for him."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Edward, "and was he taken?"

"Yes, Edward," said his mother; "but not for

some time—not until he and his companions had spent the money that Stephen had stolen, and were trying to escape from this country, and work their way to America. Then he was taken, tried, and transported. But his father's prayers followed him. His son's fate opened the old man's eyes to see his own sin, in having indulged him, and refrained from punishing him. He considered himself as the cause of this great sin, and never ceased to cry to God for the salvation of poor Stephen's soul, until at length God answered him. Stephen was brought to see his sin, and to look for pardon in Christ, and ever since then his conduct has been so completely that of a changed man that he has been granted leave to go where he likes for some length of time, and he has made use of this leave to go to Australia, where you see his first desire is to save money enough to restore that which he stole. His letter shows the reality of his repentance; and I think, too, old Thomson's sorrow shows us the same, for you heard what he said, that what he felt most now was not that his son had done this great sin, or that he had a blighted name, but that he had himself sinned against the law of his Heavenly Father, and forced Him to send upon him so heavy a punishment. And now I hope my little

son understands why it is that his mother is obliged to punish him; and I hope, too, when he is punished, he will see why he should feel sorry—even because he has offended his Heavenly Father, whose heart is all love, and who never corrects his children but for their eternal good."

NO ONE LIKE MY FATHER.

"I NEVER saw anybody like my father," thought little Henry Archer, as he sat at the table in his father's study, engaged in preparing his Latin exercise, "I never saw anybody like my father. Nothing disturbs him. There he sits with all his books before him, making up those hard accounts, and he does not seem a bit to mind my asking him questions, or to care about the noise Charley is making with his play-things. He goes on writing in his book, and does not appear at all distracted. I wish I were like him, for everything and anything is enough to call off my attention. I can't learn my lesson with Charley sitting on the carpet playing with his horse. I keep looking at him every minute, and the words all go out of my mind."

And Henry gave a disconsolate look at his book,

and heaved a deep sigh, so deep a sigh that it attracted his father's attention, who looked up from his own writing, and asked what was the matter.

"I can't do my exercise a bit, papa," was Henry's answer, in a very melancholy voice.

"Why not?" his papa asked.

"I don't know," Henry replied, "I can't keep my mind to it. Charley fidgets me so, playing with that horse. I wish he would go away to the nursery."

"Well, it's no use to wish that," said his father, "because nurse is busy minding poor little Amy, who is too poorly to be able to bear Charley's noise in the nursery, and I have promised to keep him with me till dinner-time. He does not disturb me. I can keep my mind fixed on my own duties, and you must try to do the same. I shall want to look over that exercise in a very short time, so you had better set to work about it in good earnest."

Henry turned his chair round so that he might not be able to see Charley at all, and then he applied himself with great determination to his work, and succeeded so well, that when his father asked to see his exercise, he was able to take it up, pretty correctly written. Then his papa gave him leave to amuse himself as he chose, and taking out his knife, he set to

work to make pegs for his flowers, an occupation which had employed most of his leisure time during the last two or three days, for Henry was very fond of his flowers, had a very nice little garden of his own, and, under the gardener's teaching, began to know a good deal about taking care of it.

Little Charley was greatly pleased at seeing Henry making his pegs. He left off playing with his horse to come and sit by his brother, and the elder and the younger brother were very happy together.

Meanwhile their father went on with his own work. He finished making up his accounts, and put his bills back into the desk. Then he wrote a long letter, which Henry could see, from the expression of his papa's face, required some thought. And when this was finished, he took a book, and began to read. It was a very difficult book, Henry thought, for he had happened to look into it that morning, when he was waiting for his papa to set him his lessons, and he had not been able to understand a word of it. It was all full of hard names, and a great part of it he had seen was written in Greek. But it did not seem hard to his father. He read on very rapidly, and all the time that he was reading he kept his eye on his two boys. Two or three times Henry asked him questions

about the right size he ought to make his pegs, and about the flowers they were intended to fasten down, and each time his papa answered him with the greatest kindness, and did not seem the least troubled or annoyed by his little boy's remarks. And once, when Henry laid down his knife, and little Charley took it up without his perceiving that he had done so, Mr. Archer saw the danger, and desired Henry to take away the knife from his little brother, or he would be cutting his fingers with it.

"I never saw any one like papa," again thought Henry. And so he told his nurse that afternoon, when he and Charley were taking a walk with her, and poor little sick Amy had been left at home under papa's care, and was sitting on her father's knee in his study, while he showed her pictures, and explained them to her.

"I don't think any one is like papa, do you, nurse?" he asked.

"No, Master Henry," replied nurse, "I don't think there are very many like your papa. Few little children who lose their mamma, as you have done, feel the loss so little, for your papa seems to try to be both father and mother to you. I'm sure you ought to be very thankful to have such a kind papa."

"And he's so clever, too, nurse," continued Henry. "I can't think how he can be so clever. All the time I was doing my lessons this morning, papa was explaining the hard parts to me, and going on with his own business all the time; and when Charley and I were playing together, we did not seem to disturb him at all. He even looked at what we were doing, and I think he was taking care all the time that Charley did not hurt himself, for the moment he touched my knife, papa saw it, and told me to take it away from him. I could not be like that; anything distracts my mind. The moment Charley said anything, or made a bit of noise, all the words of my Latin exercise went right out of my head, and I could not get them to come back again. I can't think of more than one thing at a time, and not always even of that. What a difference there is between me and papa!"

And Henry paused thoughtfully in very genuine admiration of his father's superior wisdom and powers of mind. He was evidently very much occupied with this subject, for when he spoke again it was to say—

"I suppose, nurse, what makes papa so different from me is because I have got a little mind, and papa has a large mind."

And that evening, when Amy and Charley had both gone off to bed, and Henry was sitting alone with his father, he could not help telling him how very much he wished he were also a grown-up man, and how much he hoped that when the time should come for him to be one, it might find him as clever as he now considered his father to be.

"You know so many things, papa," he said, "almost everything, I think, and you are able to do so much that is useful and clever, and to attend to so many things at once. I don't know any one else like you, so good and so clever."

Mr. Archer smiled at his little boy's enthusiastic way of speaking, and said—

"Don't you, Henry? I'm glad you have such a good opinion of me. I dare say I do seem both good and clever to you, who are but a little boy yourself, and not yet very wise or steady; and I hope you will find it very useful to have a friend like your father always ready to help his little son, and take care of him. For my part, I don't know what I should do if I had not a Friend a great deal more wise than I am to help me continually with his counsel."

"Oh, papa," exclaimed Henry, "do you know any one wiser than you are?"

"Yes, Henry," his father replied, "and every bit of wisdom I possess myself has been taught me by this Friend. He has done far more for me than ever I have done, or can do, for you, much as I desire to be useful to you."

"But, papa," said Henry, "you can do everything for me. I don't know anything but what you teach me; I haven't anything but what you give me. You know, papa, I could not live without you."

"And it is just the same with me and my Friend, Henry. I have not a single thing that He has not given me; I don't know a single thing that He has not taught me; and but for Him I should not be able to live, for He it is that gives me every breath of life that I draw."

"Oh, papa," said Henry, "you mean God. I thought you were speaking about some earthly friend. Of course I know that it is God who makes people wise and good. God is everybody's friend."

"Yes, Henry," said Mr. Archer, very gravely, "God is everybody's friend, and I am afraid that is just the reason why so few people seem to think of Him as a friend at all, or care anything about the good things He gives us, or the many kindnesses we receive from Him. When our blessings are common

blessings, we cease to look upon them as blessings at all. You are so accustomed to the care which your heavenly Father takes of you day by day, and to all the good things which in his mercy He provides for you, that I am afraid you don't often reflect upon the love that prompts all this care and kindness."

"I know, papa," said Henry, thoughtfully, "that God is very kind and good to us, and I very often wish I could think more about Him, and love Him more; but it's so difficult to think or care about any one we don't ever see. It's quite different when I think about you, papa, and all you do for me. I see you every day; I hear what you say, and I see what you do, and am always being reminded by something or other how good and clever you are. I'm sure, papa, I think many times every day that there is no one like my father."

"And that is just what *I* think too about *my* Father, Henry—my heavenly Father. And if your little eyes could only be opened to see the truth, it is just what you would think too. You would not then say you could not hear what God says, for you would delight in that holy book of God's law in which your heavenly Father speaks to you, just as plainly as I do at this moment by the words of my mouth. And as

to not seeing the things that God does, why, Henry, you cannot cast your eyes around you, you cannot look to the right hand or to the left, without seeing everywhere and on all sides the wonderful things that God does. Look at those countless stars now shining in the clear sky, and think who placed them there. Was it not God? Think of the glorious sun which we saw just now setting in all its splendour, and which tomorrow will rise again, and once more shed light and warmth on all created things? Who hung that beauteous sun in the heavens, and by his wondrous power sustains it there—was it not God? And oh, Henry, if you think me so clever because my mind is large enough to attend to many important subjects at once, and to superintend your lessons and little Charley's play, without allowing either the one or the other to interfere with the attention which I must needs give to the business before me, what must you not think of the wonderful wisdom of that heavenly Father who, while He directs and governs the sun in his course, the wind in its power, the waves of the sea in their tossings—while He overrules the destinies of all the kingdoms of the earth, and regulates the events that befall to each, can still condescend to listen to the beatings of each heart of man, and to hear the faintest

prayer that is breathed forth to Him—yes, even by the lips of a little child like you. Surely, Henry, if you do not love God's goodness, and admire God's greatness, it is because you have never yet really thought how good and great your heavenly Father is. I want you to think about Him now; and when your little heart is full of love and admiration for your earthly parent, as I know it often is, I want you, then, to remember what a Father you have in heaven—how wonderful in love, and goodness, and power! Take Him for your friend and counsellor now, and go to Him in every difficulty and in every trouble; and then I can promise you, Henry, from my own experience, that the experience of your life also will ever be that there is no one like your Father."

THE END.

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